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# THE DECAMERON OF A HYPNOTIST.

BY

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# SOMETHING ABOUT MYSELF.

# THE
# DECAMERON OF A HYPNOTIST.

## SOMETHING ABOUT MYSELF.

I AM what the world is pleased to call a slightly eccentric gentleman, though why, because I happen to lead a life somewhat different to that of the general run of celibates, I should be styled "eccentric" I am at a loss to understand. Probably, it is because I love to be untrammelled by the conventionalities of so-called Society, a state of existence to which my mind places a man on a par with an automaton, causing him to lose his individuality, and forcing him to lead the life of a sheep in a common herd.

Of middle age, wifeless, and free from encumbrance of every kind, I delight in roaming over the broad acres of my native England, and to facilitate my roving propensity

and, at the same time, to exonerate me from the payment of what my friends consider my due share of the taxes and rates of my country, I have had a large travelling-van built, in which I go hither and thither as my fancy dictates. Why do my friends twit me with gibes which plainly mean: "Why do you evade those rates, taxes, and other responsibilities which we are bound to bow down to and liquidate?"

I do not like gibes and insinuations of a malevolent kind, but I answer my friends—nothing!

But, gentle reader, for fear I should, at the very outset, raise a barrier of doubt between us, either as to my mental soundness, the veracity of my statements, or my seeming want of honesty in not paying what is due to my Queen and country, I will take you into my confidence, and, relying upon your sympathy, reveal my reasons.

First, there are those horrid parochial rates—what do I want with them? I am my own policeman, being well armed and able to withstand any ordinary siege. Sewers rate—pah! what do I want with sewers? Lighting rate—I want no lights; I carry my own! School Board—let those who have children educate them; no squalling brats or petulant wife for me, thank you.

There, now I have disposed of the rates, now there are the taxes—the Queen's Taxes. Very well, no one can deny my loyalty, but although I like to look occasionally at the various branches of both the army and navy, I detest war, and if everyone were like me, and ceased to pay for keeping

up our forces, why, what a gloriously peaceful time we should have! The whole thing would resolve itself into arbitration, and the horrors of war would be a thing of the past; so that our soldiers and sailors would then only exist in the form of wax models in the various museums scattered over the country.

Mind you, I must say that I fancy our country would not be quite so safe without her army and navy, but then, you see, I do not countenance war and bloodshed, and as I have set my face against it, I object to pay for it on principle.

What of the Queen?

Oh, I certainly admire her as an institution, but I think she is quite rich enough to support herself and family, but certainly, if any pecuniary difficulties should overtake her, I should contribute my mite should she appeal for support to the nation. Yes, she might confidently rely on my loyalty to assist her in any emergency of that kind.

My friends at times make uncomplimentary remarks upon me for not serving on juries and coroners' inquests. Well, why should I? I never did like law or lawyers, and the mere sight of a dead body makes me quite ill, and I object to be made ill to please other people, and what is more, I won't be!

My house on wheels—my gipsy van, if you will—in which I cruise about on land as a sailor does on the sea in his ship, is a snug tenement, divided into sitting-room and bedroom, both of which are very comfortably furnished.

I have a capital cooking apparatus which fits into small compass; for economy of space is a great desideratum in a dwelling of this kind, where the total floor space is only fourteen feet by six.

Among my "household gods" are a gun, fishing-rods, camera, tennis rackets, and other implements for amusement during daylight, but I have another amusement for the evening, which is a hobby with me, one for which my friends dub me demon, ghoul, bogey, and other uncomplimentary names, and yet my pastime is after all a very innocent and interesting one.

Until a couple of years since I was a doctor, but upon a relative dying and leaving me an annuity of £500 per annum, I handed my practice over to my younger brother and commenced what is to my mind an ideal life; one that promotes health, happiness, and knowledge, and gives one a splendid insight into the geography of one's native land.

Now for my hobby; and where is the man who has not a hobby or idiosyncrasy of some kind? I am a *hypnotist*, and when I feel inclined to hear a story I invite some casual acquaintance to dine with me, and whether he be rich or poor, I can usually make him comfortable; and after the meal I quietly exercise my hypnotic power and my guest becomes my entertainer, or, as my friends prefer to put it, my victim.

I love a story, an *original* story, and know that it can only be obtained whilst the recounter is in a state of trance. In a trance the subject has not the power to eliminate

or withhold any portion of a story, neither can he alter, or add any untruths or embellishments, but is bound by the will of his enchanter to tell any adventure or romance he may have on his mind in an intact and unalloyed manner.

Scores of stories have thus been told me under hypnotic influence, and these I have carefully taken down in shorthand, and having sifted and collated them, place a number of them in book form for the delectation of my readers.

As my friends said, I am a somewhat eccentric individual, and little surprise will therefore be exhibited at the general uncanny tone of the stories I have selected to fill this volume.

The first is one by that clever scientist, Dr. Orson Grimmery, whose discoveries will probably make his name famous among men as one of the shining lights of the nineteenth century.

# THE EXPERIMENTS OF DR. ORSON GRIMMERY.

# THE EXPERIMENTS OF DR. ORSON GRIMMERY.

DR. ORSON GRIMMERY was formerly a disciple and pupil of the learned and far-famed Dr. Nosidy, whose many discoveries (and especially that of brain-ether) placed him in the front rank of European scientists.

Unfortunately, Dr. Nosidy burnt the candle at both ends as well as the middle, and overworked himself, and just when he was upon the threshold of fresh and startling discoveries, he died, as some suppose, of fright, as he was discovered dead in a corner of his laboratory with a look of unutterable horror upon his countenance. What was the immediate cause of his sudden death will probably never be known, but it was conjectured at the time that while making certain astonishing experiments, he was suddenly brought face to face with something of such a horrifically supernatural nature that the shock was too great for his overtaxed brain, and he actually died on the spot from shock to the nervous system.

Be that as it may, it did not deter his able assistant and disciple, Dr. Orson Grimmery, from following up the experiments from the point at which the great master left them, when his labours were so suddenly brought to an end by his untimely and greatly regretted death.

That Dr. Grimmery has succeeded in producing unheard of manifestations, and has actually discovered the mode of materialising spirit, there is no reason to doubt, but that I should give his secret to the world cannot be expected. However, without explaining his *modus operandi*, I will recount the results of some of his wonderful experiments as I heard them from his own lips.

I have known Dr. Grimmery for some years, but it was not until a summer or two ago that I had the pleasure of a *tête-à-tête* with him, alone in my van. The worthy professor was staying in Surrey at the house of a mutual friend, situated on the brow of a hill near Godalming. Thinking to give my friends a surprise, I drove over to visit them unawares, and in the evening, as the sun was slowly sinking behind the hills, leaving them partially silhouetted against the warm greyish-pink of the sky, and my horse was wearily straining up the steep acclivity with his heavy load, I happened to look upward, and on the ridge of the hill adjacent to the road, beheld the figure of a man standing out blackly from the luminous roseate sky.

He was motionless, and with arms folded, and head sunk on his chest, was apparently lost in deep thought.

I remember thinking to myself: "How much that man looks like a gigantic crow!" and then changing my simile, "or like the Great Buonaparte!"

And as I reflected, and made mental notes of the strange figure, it turned and came slowly towards me, still absorbed in thought.

We approached each other, and on closer inspection, I found the stranger to be my friend Dr. Grimmery, taking his evening stroll.

He looked neither to right or left, and was passing, when I cried, à la gipsy: "Buy a nice broom, sir? Capital wood pails only a shilling each!"

With an impatient gesture of his hand, and with his eyes bent on the ground, he was about to pass me, without even a look, when I burst into a loud laugh and broke the spell of his reverie.

My van was at once stopped, and pulled through a gapway on to the heath, where I quickly unharnessed and made snug for the night, making the doctor promise to spend an hour or two with me. He was much interested with my van, and took great pleasure in helping me to prepare the evening meal, which we afterwards quietly discussed, the doctor declaring that he had not enjoyed such a meal for months. Then came my chance to give him a siesta.

He is a most able conversationalist, and I had some compunction in putting him into a trance state; but wishing to learn, without being obtrusive, how far his discoveries

had proved practicable, I quickly placed him under control, so that I might question him at my leisure, without his being any the wiser.

He is a small man, with deep-set dark eyes, a sallow complexion, wide mouth, and aquiline nose. As a scientific discoverer he, to my mind, ranks upon a par with Edison, Faraday, and Davy; but he shall speak for himself, when the reader will be enabled to judge of his scientific abilities, and form some estimate as to what may come to pass in the near future, when the astounding discoveries of the learned doctor are placed before the wondering world in a manner that will leave no doubt as to mere possibilities—he will give ocular and aural proofs of what I only dare just touch upon, namely, the materialisatfon of the spirits of deceased persons, in such a complete manner that for a brief period both locomotion and speech, those attributes of living mortals, shall be an established fact. The death of any eminent person will then matter but little, as although the body be dead, yet may the spirit answer for it. Now the doctor shall speak.

## The Story as Told to Me.

OF all the great secrets of my beloved master, Dr. Nosidy, the greatest was undoubtedly his discovery of "brain-ether," that subtle, invisible element of human life which dies not with the body but lives for ever, an eternal memorial of the human state and the material body.

Without this fortunate and wonderful discovery my subsequent experiments would have been utterly impossible; it was the key to the whole course of my scientific and laborious researches, and proved to be the "*Open Sesame*" of a whole sequence of unique scientific wonders.

I will first briefly explain what the discovery of the so-called "brain-ether" means, as it is necessary for the understanding of my more recent experiments.

When a human being dies he is coffined and placed in the ground, where in the course of time flesh, bone, and tissue resolve themselves into their component parts, and naught apparently remains but a heap of grey dust.

We say when a man dies "his soul has fled"; but practically that is not so, although so far as ordinary mundane affairs are concerned it is sufficiently correct.

By careful experiment, I find that the soul does not separate from the body and fly away no one knows whither, but while the skull lasts it retains that bony

environment as its home, so that when the skull by natural decay perishes, the soul hovers at the exact spot at which the skull last rested.

Look at it in this way :—

The brain is the storehouse of a lifelong conglomeration of every kind of information and knowledge. It is the receptacle of personal history, of bad and good deeds, and, in fact, the veritable record of the person's life indelibly incorporated and stored. *It is his soul*—his incriminator or his remembrancer of good deeds.

The man being dead, his brain decays, but as it does so it gives off a vapour or ether, which I term "brain-ether"; and this subtle matter, a thousand times more rarefied than the thinnest gas, still retains the life's record of the man, and invariably inhabits the skull while that osseous cell lasts.

"Brain-ether" is invisible.

Now all this my beloved master discovered several years since, and by inventing a certain delicate machine, which has electricity as its motive power, I have, with the aid of my astonishing power of thought-reading, succeeded in conversing with the souls or "brain-ether" of persons who have been dead for many centuries. This brain-reading machine I call the Ethogram.

This machine was my first invention of importance, but it was only a step towards my other and more astonishing discoveries.

My second invention I call the Morpheoscope, because it

enables me to raise an apparition whenever I choose to place my apparatus in order.

In order to do this I must possess the skull of the person whose presentiment is to be brought into existence, if existence it can be called, as immediately I put my invention out of gear the spectre vanishes and leaves not a trace behind.

The manner in which I discovered the phenomenon was extremely simple, and I must say fortune favoured my researches by surrounding me with propitious circumstances, but then, it must be remembered, that most great discoveries have been brought about more by accidental circumstances than by laborious, plodding research. Glass was an accidental discovery; Watt discovered the power of steam by witnessing the rising lid of his mother's kettle; and Edison's phonograph received its conception by a fortuitous little trick of vibration, which the great inventor noted and improved upon.

For a long period I searched every work I could unearth on astrology, alchemy, witchcraft, demonology, diablery, and other occult subjects; but they helped me but little to unravel the idea I had in my mind, which was suggested by my first invention. It was this:—

If the *brain* evolves an imperishable ether, why should not the *body* still retain some kind of etherealised form (or, as we call it, apparition) hovering round what remains of the *material* body?

Necromancers of old could raise apparitions; the Egyptian magicians could do the same, and further back

still we read of the witch of Endor raising the spirit of Samuel to the astonished gaze of the gigantic Saul, while at the present day certain persons inhabiting Southern Tibet claim the same occult powers.

If such persons could and can perform these wonders with the imperfect appliances at their command, why should not I, a modern savant with every instrument of delicate form and intricate mechanism at hand, do the same?

I resolved to try.

For months I studied my subject, and tried scores of experiments, which I need not recapitulate, as most of them were utter failures, but at length I hit upon an idea which was a step in the right direction.

I had noticed that ghost raising was always accomplished with the aid of smoke or vapour, and I therefore proceeded to experimentalise on the same lines.

I had a large glass case made, eight feet high and four feet square, which I placed in the centre of my laboratory. The lower part was filled with a coil of metal pipe, perforated with some hundreds of tiny holes; through these a dense volume of steam was forced from a boiler in the room below, so as to form a cloud of vapour, upon which I hoped I could produce an apparition. The steam formed a splendid impalpable ground—a better could not be desired, but the front glass was a great mistake, for the interior of the glass box soon became covered with moisture caused by the condensed steam, so that I could not see through the opacity thus produced. The side and

back glasses did not concern me, but it was imperative that I should see through the front pane.

I therefore took away the front glass, and by a series of revolving fans so controlled the ascending steam as to keep it from escaping into the room in any appreciable quantity. The surplus vapour was collected and conveyed through a funnel at the top of the apparatus, whence it escaped into the outer air.

Within the glass screen, and six feet from the ground, I suspended a human skull, to which I attached the wires of my Ethogram, and conveyed the free ends to my mechanism for assisting thought-reading.

Next, upon the ascending column of vapour, which was so dense as nearly to hide the skull from view, I threw the rays of the most powerful electric light I could procure, while I myself sat in the deep shadow thrown at the side of the room.

My next step was to convey to the brain-ether within the skull the intimation that I wished to see an apparition of its entire body, to which I received the "thought reply" that if possible my wish should be obeyed.

As I gazed with staring eyes and trembling limbs into the column of vapour, I presently perceived the clouds to be whirling upward with a different motion to what had been the case a minute before; they appeared somewhat less dense in the centre, and to part about a foot from the floor and roll in thicker masses towards the sides of the case.

Then, as I fixed my intense gaze into the hollow space thus formed, I could presently descry a shadowy form, very indistinct, but indisputably human!

It was a female form, clothed in some indefinitely coloured garment which resembled a Scotch tweed. Around and above the head floated a yellowish-brown cloud, which I surmised was the flowing hair tossing about in the surrounding ascending vapour.

All, however, was hazy, indistinct, indefinite; yet I was in ecstasies. My first effort had been attended with at least partial success; I was on the high-road to a great discovery, and felt supremely elated.

The next two or three months I devoted to producing vapours of various kinds. I experimented with various kinds of combustibles and with many combinations of chemical agents, and also with many solutions poured upon hot plates, and ejected through perforated tubes, till at length I hit upon a mixture of finely-ground herb roots, which, being burnt upon hot plates, gave me the best definition of the apparition I had hitherto obtained.

Still I toiled on day after day, making experimental vapour trials, and was presently rewarded by discovering that a certain chemical poured upon the powdered roots would make the smoke intensely black instead of a pale yellowish-grey.

This I turned to good account by utilising my steam coil for the purpose of conveying the steam of this heated chemical and so mingling it with the herb smoke, that by

regulating the chemical vapours, I could produce a cloud of any depth of colour, from an ashy-grey approaching white to a dense black.

This discovery was of vast importance, as it gave much better definition to the spectres, both male and female, which I now constantly raised, although it must not be supposed that I was equally successful in every case, much depending upon the intelligence possessed by the person (during his or her lifetime) upon whom I happened to be engaged. Persons who had led happy or meritorious lives appeared boldly and willingly, but those whose lives had been criminal or bad in other ways were very loath to appear, and usually came forth in a very indistinct manner, a circumstance I did not greatly regret.

It was, however, due to the wonderful discovery of Argon by Lord Rayleigh that I was enabled to perfect my invention of apparatus by which apparitions could be made to appear at will. My electric light was discarded, and thenceforth Argon played a great part in my scientific researches and experiments.

By degrees I so improved my apparatus that I could produce the exact counterpart of a defunct person (no matter how long dead so long as I could secure the skull), and so vivid did the apparition appear amid the vapour that one or two brother scientists to whom I exhibited the phenomena would not be persuaded they were not real flesh and blood until they had demonstrated the truth of my assertion by thrusting hand

and arm through the apparent living human being, and satisfying themselves that the supposed corporal body was a veritable spectre.

By suspending the skull at a distance of four feet from the base of the screen the figure would appear either kneeling or sitting, but if hung six feet high the figure appeared as if standing upon the lower bank of vapour.

On one occasion I obtained an apparition of remarkably large proportions, which appeared in a curiously bent position as if the subject were crippled, and I was for some time at a loss to account for the grotesque pose, until I found that my visitor was a veritable giant, and by placing his skull at six feet high I had placed it so that it was much too high for him to sit or kneel, and much too low for him to stand. By raising the skull gradually until it was six feet nine inches from the base of the large screen, I had presented to me a noble figure of that height.

By raising it another inch the figure was evidently uncomfortable and moved about uneasily, and on seeking an explanation, I found that I was making the poor fellow *stand on tip-toe!* I immediately lowered his cranium to its former position, whereupon he smiled and bowed his thanks.

So far I have never been able to fathom the mystery of phantoms appearing *clothed.* One can understand the post-mortem appearance of men and women, because although their fleshly body decays, there is still their

exact counterpart left, although invisible to the living eye and impalpable to the living touch; but by what means does a person's clothing appear again after it has decayed and crumbled into dust?

One can easily imagine the apparition of a man, but not of a coat; still, in spite of the apparent impossibility, the garments worn by the deceased do appear again, and not only those in which they died, but in other suits worn by them at some period or other of their life. Indeed, I noticed that the same disembodied persons actually appeared in different habiliments at different séances, as if they were proud of sporting their wardrobe.

I merely state the fact; but to me it is still an inscrutable mystery: of clothes I know nothing; of spectres much.

Up to this point my experiments had given me the power, by aid of the Ethogram, to converse with departed persons; while the Morpheoscope enabled me to gaze upon their counterpart in figure and clothing as they had lived.

This was the grand result of unflagging and intense study, but I had yet a higher rung of the ladder of scientific fame to mount ere I accomplished the ultimate aim of my scientific ambition.

There was only one more object to attain, and then I would search no further into the mysteries of death, for I had already discovered sufficient to alter the entire record of English history so far as the motives, characters, and designs of great historical persons is concerned, for I have

actually spoken with many of them, and seen them face to face with the aid of the Ethogram and Morpheoscope.

Now I turned my attention to the third and last great work in my ambitious programme, and that was the materialisation of the spirit form into the *reality of flesh and blood!*

There are in England several persons who claim the power of materialising a spirit form, so that for a brief period it has the appearance and attributes of a living body—a body so far material and solid that it may be touched, lifted, or shaken hands with ; but is this the outcome of real materialisation, or *clever trickery ?*

I am inclined to infer the latter, although I have never attended a single séance; but the reason of my belief is based upon the fact that a special room is usually the scene of the operation. Let one of these so-called materialising media be taken into a room he has never entered before—say the strong room of a bank or large firm—and there produce his particular familiar spirit, and materialise it so that it can be touched, and so far made real flesh and blood that it may stand, walk, and talk, and I will then be ready to alter my opinion, and apologise to the somewhat numerous body of spiritualistic media.

I again aver they cannot do it.

My case is quite different, for when I choose to select a representative body of scientific gentlemen before whom I am willing to lay bare my astounding discoveries, it shall be in the theatre attached to one of our large

hospitals or scientific institutes, so that the surroundings and attendants shall be above suspicion.

Let me resume the third portion of my experiments—*temporary materialisation*, for it is only for a brief period that an astral body can be made to resume the mould of the flesh in which it once lived.

My mode is this.

I procure a skull—the older the better—for it is far more interesting to obtain a link with the remote past than an ordinary everyday person who has quitted the earth but a few years, and whose history is but commonplace and dull. The skull is first suspended in my glass screen so as to have free movement in every direction, and next my herbal compound is burnt beneath it, throwing up a dense smoke of a very pale tint. I then attach the two wires of my Ethogram by inserting them in tiny holes on either side of the cranium, the free ends of the wires after passing through the Ethogram are then wound two or three times round my own head, where they are held in place by a close-fitting spun silk cap.

Next I adjust the lenses of the Morpheoscope, regulate the supply of Argon, and communicate a desire, by means of my thought-reading power and my immense power of will, for the astral shape to show itself.

Some spirits are very obstinate and evince a desire to withstand my will, but in the end they are bound to obey, as, however powerful their own will-force may have been in life, yet by lying dormant for several generations,

or even centuries, it has become weak from desuetude, or surprised to again visit earth.

At my bidding, therefore, the spectral form is *bound* to appear! I command, and they obey. My first attempt at materialisation was so near bringing about a fatal result, that for a long time I was fearful of another attempt, although it was perfectly successful.

I will relate exactly what occurred.

I had for some nights been sitting up very late, far into the morning, in fact, and my nervous system had consequently become somewhat deranged, but I was resolved to get through my task before closing that portion of my experiments which consisted in examining a pile of seventeen skulls which my agents in various parts of England had forwarded to me.

Everything belonging to my apparatus was in working order, and I suspended the last skull for that night's sitting. I was injecting a large quantity of chemical spray so as to mingle with the herb smoke, consequently the vapour which arose was of a dense black.

All the astral body or spectre I could obtain was a man's face and nothing more. It was that of a bald-headed, clean-shaven, strong-featured man of 50 years of age, and round the circumference of the head he wore a line of curly iron-grey hair. Body he appeared to have none. I was somewhat puzzled, for there was the head with its blinking eyes looking straight at me, but even with the lenses I could see no form beneath the neck!

I arose and walked to the screen, thrusting my hand into the dense smoke; but my fingers encountered nothing tangible, and even the head gradually faded away, leaving naught but the suspended skull.

I resumed my seat, and after a few moments' cogitation resolved to change the colour of the vapour. This I did by slightly lessening the discharge of chemical spray. Immediately the vapour became a little paler, and I could dimly discern a form of indefinite proportions; it appeared like a sack.

Then I turned the chemical spray off altogether, and quickly the vapour became a pale grey, and behold, before me stood the figure of a monk dressed in a black cassock, which sable costume projected upon the *black* smoke had hitherto made the body invisible to me.

We bowed to each other, and I held a long conversation by means of the Ethogram with the mediæval prelate. He was a prior of Croyland Abbey, in Lincolnshire, who died in 1371, and a very intelligent man I found him. Our thought-conversation was carried on in Latin, for I found the English of the fourteenth century spoken with a pronounced Yorkshire brogue (the county of his birth), so different to our modern vernacular, that I had reat difficulty in understanding him.

We conversed upon his time on earth; upon the customs of those days; upon his abbey, and upon his personal intellectual attainments, when I was startled to find he had studied astrology and the various forms of necromancy,

having had a cell fitted up as a laboratory for working out theories in the occult sciences.

I learnt a great deal from him, and soon discovered that some of the diligent monks of the Middle Ages knew more than we modern savants give them credit for. He in his time had raised ghosts and even evil spirits, and I was fain to put some of his ideas to the test, obtaining from him all the data I could gather, and carefully noting everything down.

In return I informed him of the progress I had made in my researches, which appeared to give him great satisfaction, and caused him to become quite excited—so much so, that his eyes appeared to scintillate in their ghostly sockets, indicative of the wonderful intelligence of the man.

The strain upon my mental faculties was beginning to cause me uneasiness, for it must be remembered that our whole conversation was by thought-reading and thought transmission, and I was about to bid my friend of the fourteenth century good night, when the thought struck me—*Can I materialise him?*

I communicated my idea to the Prior, who was good enough to say he would endeavour to do all in his power to assist me, and as he had given much time to the study of occult science, I could not wish for an abler or more willing assistant.

We tried various experiments, but in vain.

Once or twice he affirmed that he felt more solid, but

on thrusting my hand against his body, it met with no resistance, he was as ethereal as before.

"One more try," I said to my friend, "and then we will give it up for this occasion at least."

Our next experiment was an exertion of will-power.

He was to obey my commands implicitly, and I, getting more excited, commanded him to "become flesh of the earth again!"

"Quit thy spectral form, monk!" I cried, "and return, if but for a brief interval, to thy mundane shape! By our brotherhood's calling, I command you, step forth a living man!"

A deep sigh broke from the lungs of the spectre; his lips moved, and with a deep resonant voice he replied:

"I obey!"

Suiting his action to the words, he stepped from the screen, and advanced with outstretched hands toward me.

I gave a shriek!

I knew no more.

I fell with a crash at his feet.

The next thing I remember was a loud knocking at my laboratory door and the smashing in of the panels.

My servant on arising in the morning and not finding me in my bedroom, had sought me in the laboratory, and not getting an answer, had broken open the door and found me lying in a pool of blood.

I inquired about the Prior; they did not know what I

meant; how should they? I cast my eyes to the screen—there hung the skull and nothing more.

I was at once put to bed and a doctor sent for.

He came and bound up a deep cut in my neck; for I had fallen upon a bottle and made a nasty wound, which might have caused my death from loss of blood, had not my servant found me in time.

"Over-study," he remarked; "system run down—probably no food for several hours—vertigo; a fall, eh?"

Not wishing him to know the true cause of my collapse I praised his diagnosis, declaring he had hit my case precisely.

I kept my bed for a week, then had a few days at the seaside to recruit my health, and once more came back to town and resumed my studies.

I looked many times at the skull. I shook my head. "Was the materialisation an hallucination after all, or was it a reality?" I asked myself.

For several days I could not gather sufficient courage even to raise the spectre form of the Prior; but at length, bethinking me of the noble leaf I should add to the garland of science if my discovery could be established as a fact, I found courage to raise the astral body of the Prior once again.

He appeared at my bidding, and we conversed. He was sorry he had been so hasty in his materialisation as to frighten me, and promised that he would put on

his fleshly body more circumspectly, if I would once more put him through the ordeal.

With shaking limbs I did so, and stood astonished at my work.

The ecclesiastic slowly became opaque and then solid, and with a greeting of a friendly nature, to reassure my failing nerves, quietly stepped from the vapour screen, and stood before me, a man of flesh and blood—*a living b ing*.

He advanced and shook hands with me, with a gras not of the chilly dead, but of the living; it was a warm, hearty hand shake, and, strange to say, I felt relieved and comfortable, though I must own I pinched my legs and bit my tongue to assure myself that it was not all a dream.

I looked in the screen.

It was *empty*, and even the *skull was gone!*

No, it was no dream, for night after night I sat with the same good monk, and conversed freely in Latin with him. Each meeting lasted but about twenty minutes or half an hour, after which period he became faint, and begged leave to return to the screen and spirit-land again.

I always immediately granted his request, when he would return hurriedly to his glass grave, and slowly melt away till nothing remained but the dangling skull.

I have many sheets of paper covered with his writing, consisting principally of scientific and chemical

formulæ, which he was good enough to indite for me, and can at any time summon him to my presence, for I guard his skull with great care in an iron safe, for fear of an accident to it.

Other persons (perhaps fifty) I have brought temporarily back to existence, some of whom are very stupid—consequently their skulls are not worth keeping—while others have most interesting histories and are worth preserving.

If I were a novelist I could tell some very pretty romances that have come to me by occult means, but I am not, I am a scientist, and ere long I shall startle the scientific world by divulging my discoveries, but not until I have perfected my apparatus and mode of exhibition, which still leaves much to be desired.

When that occurs, what a resurrection of historical persons will take place! How eagerly tombs will be searched for skulls, and the defunct materialised for a brief period, and exhibited to crowded audiences!

What work for the recording phonographs to engrave their voices on their waxen tablets! How busy photographers will be plying their pleasing art! Fancy photographing Cœur de Lion in his body, as he lived, or the unfortunate Anne Boleyn, or Richard, the so-called Hunchback! It really seems past belief, but *I know it as a reality!*

What leading questions will be put—questions that will require the History of England to be *re-written!* The

mysteries of centuries will be elucidated, and I, Dr. Orson Grimmery, will go down to posterity as the greatest man of the nineteenth century, for before the twentieth century dawns the scientific men of Europe shall have been initiated into the secret of my profound researches and discoveries!

I was astounded at Dr. Grimmery's recital, and when I awoke him from his hypnotic trance, had grave doubts as to whether what I had heard were the ravings of a diseased mind, or the real discoveries of a man of tremendous scientific attainments.

From what I know of the gentleman, and what I have since heard from his own lips when in his normal state, I must confess that I consider the Doctor actually and honestly believes he possesses the wonderful power he claims.

Wishing, upon a subsequent occasion, to hear a recital of some old-time romance, I prevailed upon him to pay me another visit, the result of which I will tell another time.

# JOSH INGHAM: TRAPPER.



"An Arrow Struck the Stalwart Indian."

# JOSH INGHAM: TRAPPER.



N old adage says, "Birds of a feather flock together," and I have often found it to be correct in many ways. The feathered bipeds are fond of their own genus, and love birds of a like nature to their own. The human biped has his associates in like manner: the ocean and sailors for the man who gets his living by the sea; the soldier loves the gun and those who use it; the angler finds companionship with those of similar piscatorial pursuits; and naturally I, being a wanderer, find congenial society in the company of those of nomadic proclivities.

What wonder, then, that when "Buffalo Bill" and his Red Indian Show were in England on the first occasion, some ten years since, that I should be attracted among the many thousands who flocked to the exhibition?

Thanks to the courtesy of Mr. Cody, I spent much time among his troupe both of Indians and white men, and

among the latter was one Joshua Ingham, who in his young days was a trapper on the upper waters of the famous Yellowstone River. He was an old man and full of Indian lore; in fact, from his great experience among the Western tribes, must have known as much of their customs as they did themselves.

For thirty years he had lived in the far West as trapper, hunter, guide, and scout, his startling adventures being enough to fill quite a large book.

I spent some hours with this remarkable man, and at length became quite intimate with him, listening as eagerly to his thrilling yarns as any schoolboy.

They were very strange stories, and had a great resemblance to truth; but I asked myself, "Are they true, or has the old man told them so often as to make himself believe they actually occurred?"

I would endeavour to apply my test. I invited him to come and see me (my van was then in Epping Forest), and as Sunday was the only day upon which he could be absent from the show, he accepted my invitation for that day.

He kept his promise, and we spent a very happy day together, wandering through the glades and tortuous paths of the forest, making my caravan our centre point.

In the evening, being excited by the stories of Indian life which Ingham had recounted during the day, I felt the desire very strongly upon me to hear a really true story from the old man's lips while in a trance state.

My visitor was nothing loth, and allowed himself to be hypnotised without the least objection, when he told me the following remarkable adventure, which occurred while he lived among the Blackfeet Indians during the early forties, before the white man had introduced those scourges, small-pox and spirits, among them, which in after years played such havoc among the whole of the aboriginal tribes of America, so that at one time they were in danger of being entirely blotted out.

## The Story as Told to Me.

IT don't matter what goes amiss in this hayr life of ourn, but you jist take it from me, there's a petticoat at the bottom of it. Women were brought onto this airth about the same time as us men, and they are so consarnidly tricky that they are into mischief when you least expect it.

What does a trapper know of women, and what does he know of love?

Just wait a bit and I'll tell what happened to me in the early forties. Love somehow always puts me in mind of eels, and women of water; wherever you find water you are nearly bound to find eels, and wherever you find women there's love somewhere near. If *you* can't find it some other chap will, and don't you forget it.

The women have a lot to answer for; they are the rummiest critters under the sun, and many a good man has gone down before their eyes like a black-tail when hit fair and square in the fore-ribs with an ounce bullet.

This yer love is one of the uncertainest things that can happen to a man. It's like small-pox among the Indians; they hain't got a symptom of it one day, then it catches them the next and spreads all over 'em till they've got it bad from head to foot, and if they don't get cured slick

it takes 'em off by the dozen, just like pizened corn strewn among rats.

I got it bad once, and it took me off in double quick time, but then I was only a younker not above five and twenty, and I must say, looking back at that time, nigh on fifty years ago, that although she was only an Indian girl she was a stunner and no mistake about it. She was worth a fight, and by the best claw on a grizzly's foot, I had it fur her sake, too.

Now I'll tell yer how it all happened, and then you'll see what kind of a fool a man in love can make of hisself, to say nothing of how a pretty woman will play with the lives of men and show no regret when they lose them for her pleasure.

In 1844 and 5 I spent eighteen months with a tribe of Blackfeet on the upper waters of the Yellowstone, and was treated as one of their tribe, and must say it was one of the happiest times of my whole life. It was a lazy, pleasant time—plenty to eat and drink, lots of sport and fun of all kinds, trappin' was good, and the gals of the tribe had a kindly eye to "Smiling Deer," as they called me. Perhaps if they saw me now they'd christen me "Old Grizzly," for I know I look it.

The head chief of the tribe was called Man-ha-tar (Creeping Wolf), and he had a very pretty daughter named Min-ne-tee (Laughing Eyes). She was the beauty of the tribe and—well I'm no good at flowers o' speech, but she was a reg'lar stunner! Now by that I mean she

was something uncommonly out o' the reg'lar line of women. She was tall and full of figure, with roses on her cheeks showing through her tawny skin, and as to paddling, and shooting with her bow and arrow, singing and dancing, she was a reg'lar—well, a reg'lar what I should call a out-and-outer. I can't describe her, but you'll no doubt understand what I mean when I say she looked a reg'lar queen.

She was jist risin' eighteen when I first put my eyes on her, and I kinder trembled with a queer sort o' sensation, which I arterwards found was what's called "*Love at first sight,*" and, bless my heart if it didn't make me feel right queer all over.

But she was a great chief's daughter, and I nothing but a poor trapper, and out in them wild parts gals have to be bought before a man can take one as his wife. A chief requires big presents before he gives up his daughter; he don't give her away like white folks do theirs, though, by the way, some of them are not bad hands at a bargain, and are more underhanded over the deal than an Indian chief who, after a palaver with the medicine man, says, "There's my gal, she's worth so much; who'll buy her?" The civilised mamma has no medicine man to consult, so Mr. Lawyer is called in and the purchase money fixed up in black and white. That's white fashion, and where the difference comes in beats me.

Well, having neither horses or trappings such as Indians delight in, I had no right to think anything of Min-ne-

tee; but somehow after a month or two we were in each other's company a great deal, and there was no mistake about it we were in love with each other as desperately as if we were Romeo and Juliet theirselves.

I was on capital tarms with the old chief, Man-ha-tar, and he loved me as if I was his own son, but then he was one o' them greedy old varmints that never gives away something for nothing; he had plenty of hosses, and heaps of blankets, and lots of fine dresses and bead-work, but the old hunks wanted more. Goodness knows why, 'cause blankets and hosses ain't things you can eat, leastwise in times of plenty, though I've put my teeth through many a juicy piece o' hoss in famine time.

The old man soon saw how matters stood atween Min-ne-tee and me, and thought it about time to get her a husband afore matters took too serious a turn.

At a grand pow-wow he announced that Min-ne-tee wished for a husband, and that any who wished to have her for his squaw must consult the medicine man (always the most crafty villain of the tribe), and state what he would exchange for her.

Four young bucks fancied her, and while the palaver went on, Man-ha-tar and his daughter retired to their lodge and were supposed not to know what was in the wind, which was what we may tarm Indian etyket, or in other words, "business bunkum."

There was a terrible hubbub in the council tent for two or three hours; I could hear the young bucks holding

forth and telling the biggest lies they could think of as to the brave deeds they had done, of their wealth, and of what they would give Man-ha-tar as a soother for the loss of his daughter.

My heart, as you may imagine, was all of a flutter, and I must own that I felt real bad at the thought of losing my pretty companion for ever. We had hunted and canoed together and were like brother and sister, and it appeared to me as if she was suddenly to be taken away and slaughtered, and I could not bear the thought of seeing her borne off by a durned redskin.

What could I do in the matter? I had nothing of any value to offer for the hand of Min-ne-tee. I was in despair.

Min-ne-tee and I sat hand in hand in her father's tepé for the last time, tears streaming down her cheeks, poor gal, for she didn't want to be parted from me on any tarms.

She approached her father, and declared her love for me, but the old man only laughed—how could he marry his daughter to a beggar?

Goods in an Indian's eyes are the only signs of wealth, position, and power. I had just what I stood upright in, so in the estimation of the old chief must have looked very small 'taters.

The day passed wearily away, and I lay all night tossing and twisting about like a canoe in the rapids, trying to think of some way to obtain the hand of Min-ne-tee in spite of her four rich lovers.

Could I carry her off in the night?

Impossible. I should be followed and killed before I had gone an hour's journey.

Could I cajole the old chief and pretend I had blankets and stores of all kinds to arrive in the spring, and he should have them all?

Too thin!

What *could* I do?

Presently a bright idea struck me. I would challenge the richest of the suitors—challenge him to fight for the hand of Min-ne-tee, for by the Blackfeet's law in such a case (as in trial by battle) is that the goods of the conquered man become the victor's property.

I laid awake all night puttin' my plans in order, and in the morning made tracks for the lodge of old skinflint Man-ha-tar, and put my idea as clear as I could before him. The old rascal smoked his pipe solemn-like and heard me out, and I could see he had got a big idea on his mind from what I had laid before him.

He would consider. He would speak in the council house that day.

I felt relieved.

There was yet a kinder spark of hope for me. I saw Min-ne-tee, and we talked arnestly together for some time, and then she went to her father and begged him to consider my proposal, and allow us to fight to the death, and she would be squaw to the survivor.

"Wait and see," was the old man's reply.

At noon, amid much shoutin', yellin', and beatin' of drums and shakin' of skin rattles, the council tent was opened, the chief men came in and seated themselves around the skin walls, and through the rents in the side numerous heads all daubed with paint and clay were thrust in to hear and see what took place.

The chief and his "Medicine Man" squatted in the centre of the circle with the four young bucks in front of them, while I sat on the chief's right hand, layin' low like.

The usual ceremonies were gone through, and the calumet passed round, so that each could take a few puffs of the herb tobacco called knick-a-knick, and then the grand pow-wow commenced.

The young bucks, in all their fine trappings and painted glory, strutted about in such an absurd manner that it was enough to make a hoss laugh; they looked for all the world like a set of cock bush turkeys with their fans spread. A showman would ha' made a fortun' with them there four painted ninnies.

One by one they said their say, and banged their chests with their fists, and the assembled council grunted approval, and the four suitors sat down.

Then old Man-ha-tar nodded to me, for it was my turn, and up I jumps, and strutted about like a lifeguard, and swaggered and bragged and lied like the rest o' them, but somehow my speech didn't seem to ketch on with the redskins as it should, and that kinder riled me, so, fool

like, I must get angry, and working my dander up, I challenged any of the lovers to fight me for the gal's hand right there and then.

That pleased 'em. Give an Injun blood and he's happy.

Now, thinks I, I shall have a chance arter all, for the whole assembly yelled their approval as I sat down, covered in sweat and feeling wery much relieved.

Then up rose Man-ha-tar, and there was silence for what he had to say, and as near as I remember this is the sum total of his speech.

He would have no blood shed in his village, but as we all five wanted the gal, and only one could have her, we should fight for her under sartin' conditions.

We should each be armed alike with a rifle, tomahawk, and knife, and should leave the camp next day, each taking a separate trail, and should find each other as best we could and fight it out amongst us, so that the one who brought in the scalps of the other four should take Min-ne-tee for his squaw. Now that was what I call a fair and squâr fite all round.

But now came the artful old cuss's reason for all this, and that's where the old 'coon was to score.

Before starting, each man was to leave in the hands of the "Medicine Man" whatever he was willing to give for the bride, and all the articles were to be stored in the council lodge except the hosses, and they were to be marked and corralled by the chief's tepé, so as he could keep his eye on them; and he had a sharp one too.

When the wily old villain sat down everyone shouted and yelled with delight, and the whole thing was quickly passed, as they say in the Senate. We five young fools were not even consulted in the matter; but there was no getting out of it, for an Indian to show the white feather among his tribe meant that he would be handed over to the whole kit of squaws, who would daub him with paint, tie him up to a post, and never leave him till they had tortured the life out of him.

I saw such a thing happen once, and it was a dreadful sight. The poor fellow was tied to a stake, his mouth stuffed with pounded prairie grass, and no food given him for several hours. Then the she fiends set about him and pulled every hair off his scalp, a few at a time; then he was scratched with their finger nails, and bitten till he was covered with blood from head to foot; bone needles were stuck in him till he looked like a porkerpine, and then when he was nearly fainting with agony and dangling kinder loose like from the torture post, they finished him off with knives.

Although his agony was dreadful he only gave an occasional moan, and that made the hell-cats yell with excitement. Towards the end natur' gave way, and he was sorter insensible, and so he died—a death worse than any pig. That just shows what women kin be when they let loose on a chap—they are devils in petticoats.

Well, next day the five of us were ready at noon, and all the village was in a hullabaloo. Each man was in full

war paint; red, blue, and yaller were the colours, and some on 'em had put it on pretty thick too. I was just in breeches, moccasins, and leather huntin' shirt with my old squirr'l cap on my head, and had my old shootin' iron cleaned up to the nines. So as to be equal to the tothers, I had a good tomahawk with a tough ash haft, and my usual straight-bladed huntin' knife, stuck in a bead-work sheath Min-ne-tee had worked for me.

At noon we all assembled at the long spear stuck in the ground in the centre of the village, and each of us was served with a bag of dried deer meat, and another of parched corn. Then the Medicine Man presented each of the men with a charm, that is, a little bead-work pouch with some bits of bone, bird's claws, feathers, and pebbles, and such-like rubbish in it, which was supposed to bring good fortune to each one. He gave me one, too, and all that was in it was a couple of hazel nuts and a bunch of 'possum fur. What good was that?

Then out stepped Min-ne-tee, so as to let the assembled yelpers see which she had set her mind on. To each of the braves she gave a little carved figure of a grizzly bear —just to si'nify that they were to be as brave and ferocious as that tough customer; but when she came to me she handed me a little English-made purse — one o' them things you have to shift the rings back and for'rard to get at the money. Then she told me not to open it till I had started, (on my darned fool's job)!

Old Man-ha-tar started us off to five different pints of the compass, so that we were all well separated.

When I got away from the village I can just tell you I didn't feel none too spry. Here was I likely at any minute to have a bullet put through my ribs by one o' them durned redskins; but still I worn't afeard like, because they'd got a level chance of bein' drilled with an ounce of lead from my shootin' iron; and I kin tell you I warn't no smouch in them days, either at shootin' or travellin' sharp, and I knowed as much of cunning ways and pickin' up a trail as most Indians, for I had been at it all my life, being born, as you may say, among them, for I was persented to the admirin' world at Fort George, on the Assineboine river.

Anyway, it was a skeery feelin', and I had to look at every bit of rock or tree before I could pass it. I sat down betwixt two rocks, after I had tramped about an hour from the village, and thought out what a gineral would call a plan o' campaign.

It was no use settin' still, I'd got to hunt or be hunted, and I determined to keep to high ground. I worked round a ridge and flung my eyes in all directions, but nare a Indian I saw the whull o' that day.

I slept that night in the hollow of a tree, and a blamed uncomfortable night I had of it. I started at every sound, and was glad to find my hair safe on my head when I woke from a troubled snooze, which I fell into towards break of day.

I had some tough deer meat and a handful of parched corn—rare stuff if your teeth are a bit out of gear—and

then, having no water, cautiously made my way down to the river in the valley; but I was forestalled, for alongside a rock jutting into the water I could disarn the form of one of the painted young chaps I was arter.

Down I went on hands and knees to kinder stalk him like you would a deer. I made good use of whatever cover I could, meaning to get behind a big rocky outcrop, that loomed up some two hundred yards from where the Indian brave was standing drinking from his little wooden cup.

After a long crawl I got right snug behind the rock and peeped round. Good! he was still there.

I knelt and took careful aim at the poor wretch and pulled, the report making the rocky valley wake up in every part, and shaking the neighbourhood, as if fifty rifles had been fired one arter the other, for it was what you might call a eckering valley.

He threw up his arms and fell back into the water; but at the very same instant, and before I had time to rise from my knee, a *second report rang out*, and a bullet struck the rock agin which I was kneeling. It flattened out about a foot above my head; had I been standing I should have been a gorner to a sartinty!

I looked round and saw the hideous face and form of "Little Paw," another of the young bucks, not more than a hundred and fifty yards above me.

It was a question of who could load quickest and get the shot off first. Like lightning I handled my powder

flask and in went the charge, but when I looked up as I rammed home the wad, I saw that "Little Paw" had dropped his gun and was bounding down the slope towards *me, tomahawk in hand, thinking to brain me before I had time to load.*

I only took a quick glance, and then I bunked—not half as fast as he was coming after me, but as I ran I slipped a bullet into a greasy-patch and popped it inter the muzzle.

The Injun was by that time within fifty yards of me, and I fumbled to get the ramrod in, but twice I missed it; the third time I got it in, and home went the bullet to its place at the bottom of the barrel.

"Little Paw" was within twenty yards, and I could hear his breathing and his muffled imprecations as he closed with me.

A little priming was wanted for my gun. I suddenly halted and sprinkled a pinch of powder in the pan, shut down the striking plate, and turned suddenly on my foe.

I had no time to raise the rifle, so I aimed full at his breast and pulled the trigger, but to my horror it only flashed in the pan.

At the flash "Little Paw" halted kinder scared, and that little pause saved me, for reversing my weepon, I brought the stock down on his skull just as he made a dash at me with his deadly tomahawk. It *was* a smash and no mistake, and the ghastly sight made me feel right queer. I didn't think I could give a feller such a clip in the skull.

I sat down on the ground panting for breath, my heart

banging agin my ribs like a clapper in a bell. I don't exactly know how I felt; I was so excited I hardly knew what I was doin', but I remember saying to myself, "Steady, Josh, a cool head and the game's yourn."

I looked all around, and then laid out full length on the turf to ketch up my nerves a bit, which were what the poets call "unstrung"—kinked up a bit.

I knew it would be no safe spot for me to stop long in unless I was under shelter, for the other two beggars would hear the two reports, and be edging round to see what was in the wind, and if they got me between 'em, well, good-bye, Josh Ingham!

I took "Little Paw's" scalp, and as it was in an awful pickle of blood and stuff, I washed it in the river and put it in my pouch, and there found Min-ne-tee's little purse, which I put in my pocket while I got the other Injun ashore and scalped him.

"Pee-la-ke" was his name, and that means the mist that floats over rivers and swamp land. I could see him lying in the river in a pool about six feet deep, just in the shelter of the big rock which had given him such false security.

Lor! how I kept a-looking round to see if I was goin' to be served with the same sauce that I had ladled out to Pee-la-ke!

What was I to do? How could I get his scalp? I warn't goin' to strip for cert'in, and I warn't goin' to fish him up with my rifle!

I was never at a loss long how to get over any obsticle. I ran back to "Little Paw," and off with his leather leggings. Out knife, and in a couple of minutes I had cut a leather thong several yards long, then with my tomahawk I cut down a forked branch and made a hook, and tied it to the end of the thong. Of course it floated, but I soon bound on a piece of rock for a sinker, and in less than five minutes up bobbed poor Pee-la-kee with his paint all gone from his face, which bore a strange look, as if he was a good bit surprised at what had happened.

Off came his hair instanter, and after burying their rifles and other tools and trinkets, so that I could find 'em agin, off I started for the hills, for fear the other two redskins might come on me unawares.

Lor! how I sweated and trembled as I crept slowly up the hill—not for no darned fear, mind you, but for excitement and the joy of having *bagged a brace!* I might ull off the game and get the gal arter all.

Nothin' more happened that day, and at dusk I crawled into a cleft in the rocks, and found a place where I could lay full length, and by gum! I *did* sleep—slept like a top till the sun was high in the sky next mornin'.

I had my meal of tough deer meat once more, and chewed away for nigh an hour at the frizzled corn, till my throat began to feel like the corn, dry and parched. I was sadly in want of a drink arter my dry victuals, and had just stood up and was givin' myself a good stretch to take the kinks out of my back and limbs,

when I see a shadow strike on the rocky side of my sleeping chamber.

I put my hand on my rifle and stood ready to give whomsumever it might be a bit of a frite—"one pill to the dose," as the doctors say.

I hadn't long to wait, for round the corner came a big head, followed by a big shaggy body—it was a b'ar.

I never moved an inch, and the old feller stopped short as much as to say, "Hallo! what are you up to here, anyhow?"

I hesitated to fire, for if I only wounded the great beast I was a gorner, and my shot would put the two redskins on my track for a sartinty.

The old critter kinder scrambled his claws about on the rocky ground, as if sharpening up to have a go at me, and looked right wicked out of his little yaller eyes at me. He was a grizzly, and a big one at that, and his great chops were covered with a sticky slime; he had been having a good time in a honey-hole.

Then he held up a huge paw and snorted a bit, and I thought, "Now for it—in he comes."

But no, he turned quietly round and was going away peaceful like, and the sight sort o' riled me to see such a fine robe walk away and me not to put a bullet in it and call it mine. Durn the redskins, Min-ne-tee must have that robe for her bed at any price.

So down I went on one knee and let fly behind his fore shoulder. It was a beautiful shot and dropped him

right in his track. I have often thought since what a foolish thing it was for me to do, for a big grizzly seldom drops with a single ounce of lead, and I have known 'em to walk away with a pound of lead in 'em all in nice little round ounces. Never mind, I was in luck's way. I had done a good day's work, but I daren't show myself while I skinned my prize, for I should have been a target for one of them prowling redskins, who would sure to be attracted by the crack of my we'pon.

My thirst increased so much that at last I could hold out no longer, so, mustering up my courage, I marched boldly down to the river like a soldier on parade and had a big drink. I must say it was a very skeery feelin' to walk about in this manner expecting every rock or bush to conceal an enemy.

Now, thought I, there's "Blue Jay" and "Big Bull" to wipe out, and then I've done! But why the blarmnation don't they have a turn at each other, and save me so much trouble? It ain't them four agin me, but each agin the other.

Perhaps they've fought and killed each other unbeknown to me, and if so I must find 'em up, and shift their hair to my pouch.

Well, I sorter pottered about in the safest places I could find, but not a sight could I get of the redskins till near on evening, when I caught sight of one leaving the burying ground by the river. He crept stealthily along behind the scrub and then disappeared over a

ridge covered with cotton trees, as if he had his eye on "Big Bull," for this one I made out to be "Blue Jay," a tall thin young buck.

Now, thinks I, that burial ground will be my best place for safety, and away I carefully crawled to it, just like one o' them little green lizerds what lay asleep half the day on the rocks, and seem to live on nothin' but air, for I never seed one eatin' anything.

It was a wild sort o' place, a hilly waste covered with short scrub, and jutted out into the river like a landing place.

The Blackfeet don't bury their dead in graves, but erect several poles in the ground and build a platform of boughs and birch bark on top. Then the body is placed on top in full dress and paints and wrapped in skins and blankets, and left till both stage and body decay and drop to pieces.

There was some twenty or thirty bodies laying on their wooden shanties, and I crawled among the bushes and poles to see if I could pitch on a place to sleep, for the Injuns are very superstitious, and seldom enter one of their buryin' grounds except to bury a relative or mourn for one for so many days. The sight of a buryin' patch ain't pretty, and the smell ain't all sweet prairie flowers; it ain't a nosegay on props, even on a frosty day.

Just under a burial lodge I saw a nice clump of cotton-wood, and, thinks I, "that'll make me a cosy nest for the night, I'll take a peep at it and come back arter it's dark."

My eye, how I stared! Why, "Blue Jay" had only just quitted it, for there was his bag of parched corn, or at least all he had left of it, and his skin half emptied of deer meat.

Jeroosalum! here was a go. He would be almost sure to come to his lair after dark; but that would be another hour or more. He had no doubt seen "Big Bull" and was stalking him. He was out for a bit o' sport.

I sat down to think, and as I sat there, bang! went a gun far away over the tother side of the hill.

"Good luck to yer!" says I. "I hope you have bagged Mr. "Big Bull," for he's the toughest customer of the lot of you."

I chanced just then to cock my eye up at the dead chap above me, and I reckoned I might as well change places with him and wait the return of "Blue Jay."

No sooner thought of than done; down came the corpse instanter, and off came its stinking old blankets, and on to my back they went, rags and tatters and all.

I laid my rifle, knife, and tomahawk on the wooden stage, and pitched the poor old Blackfoot plump into the river to feed the fish, and then climbed up and took his place.

I made myself comfortable, laying out full length with my rifle handy, and as it was just dusk, amused myself with counting the stars and wondering how long it would be before my long "Blue Jay" returned.

I kept still as a mouse, and—well, it sounds strange with such dangerous surroundings—I acterly went fast asleep. The cool breeze and day's excitement sent me right bang off, and when I awoke it was pitch dark, except that here and there a little star winked down at me between the rifts in the great night clouds.

Was "Blue Jay" beneath me?

That was my first idea on waking, but it was too dark for me to peep through one of the cracks and see, so I had to lay still wearily watching for dawn, and I seemed to lay there for hours and hours, and had to keep pinchin' my leg to keep me awake.

At last a faint purple cloud rose above the distant prairie, and my surroundin's were light enough for me to take a peep below.

I couldn't make nothin' out for a long time, 'cause the bushes threw such a black shadder.

I closed my eyes a few minutes, and when I opened them I could make out the shape of a man on the airth below me.

What a cowardly job killing a man in his sleep seemed to be; but it must be done, for no doubt he had got "Big Bull's" scalp stowed away about him somewhere, and this would give me the four bits o' ha'r and victory, besides a stunnin' fine bride!

How should I settle him?

It was only a detail: his scalp was my prime objec'. I waited till it grew a little lighter, then loosening my knife in its sheath, I carefully drew it.

I peeped over the edge of my gruesome bedstead, and saw "Blue Jay" laying on his right side with his rifle atween his legs, and his tomahawk on the ground beside him.

Gathering my legs up under me, I sprang swiftly down, and before the poor lad was aware of my presence, stabbed my keen, heavy hunting knife down inter his heart, just underneath the armpit.

He flew up into a sitting position and his eyes opened, but that was all, for he instantly fell back dead, without a moan or cry.

I searched in vain for "Big Bull's" scalp, but couldn't find it about him nowhere. I was surprised at this, as I reckoned he had wiped the big buck out when I heard the shot fired the previous evenin'.

I scalped the poor fellow (he was a good chap, and I had had many a long day's sport with him), and then had a good meal of his remainin' meat and corn.

As I sat munching I happened to pull out Min-ne-tee's gift—the purse. I opened it and found in it six bullets. They were very heavy and bright. I scraped one and found it too hard for lead, and put it down for silver, which it was. The young minx no doubt reckoned silver bullets to carry a charm, and gave them to me to *pot her admirers with.*

"Bless her heart!" I thought as I sat there. "I'll not waste 'em; very likely 'Big Bull' is wounded and not killed, so I'll go and stalk him." Somehow I felt reckless

now that I had bagged three of my four enemies, and actually, like a duzzy fool, fired my piece at a passin' eagle.

Bang went my gun and I missed my mark, but it didn't matter a bit, I only wanted to unload and then load ag'in with one of the silver bullets afore I started after my last redskin.

I stood up and was carefully measuring out the charge of powder, when a horrid war-whoop changed me to stone. I looked round and saw the smirched features and burly form of "Big Bull," who was runnin' pretty smart towards me, rifle in hand. He had no doubt been watching my movements, and when he saw me shoot at the eagle knew it was his time to catch me at a disadvantage.

I stood several seconds like a blamed fool with my gun in my hand and then turned and fled like a squaw from a mad buffalo bull.

I heard a report and felt a pain in my thigh, then I stumbled and fell headlong to the airth, and rolled over upon my back, drawin' my knife to have one last dig at my enemy; but, alas! I could not rise, and with exultin' yells "Big Bull" was upon me.

His eyes seemed alive with hatred as he taunted me with horrid names and bade me "come on, pale-face!"

I could only struggle up on one knee, and gave myself up for lost.

He raised his heavy rifle, and with a fiendish yell was about to bring it down and crush my skull in, for I had no means of defence but my knife, and that was no good at all.

Up went the rifle, and I took my last look on airth, as I thought; but it didn't fall on my hapless head, for there came a whizz and a thud as an arrow struck the stalwart Indian full in the chest, and he fell forward right on top of me.

Another minute and Min-ne-tee stood beside me, for it was her what had shot the arrow and saved my life. She was my guardian angel, and no mistake, though I must say it was a bit unfair to "Big Bull," who didn't bargain for two opponents.

I took his scalp, and with the help of Min-ne-tee got back to the village, where I was laid up for several weeks with my wounded leg. When I got about ag'in, my eyes! warn't there some high jinks in that village. There was two big dances on one day—a scalp dance and a weddin' dance.

For twelve months after that Min-ne-tee and me lived as happy as two birds in a nest—she was jist as good, an' brave, an' kind a gal as mortal ever had his arm around.

Then, one day, came a sudden swoop of Crows on our village, and a fight that lasted two days, but we licked 'em and made 'em turn tail. Although they were at first two to one we thinned 'em out with our steady fire whenever they showed themselves out of cover.

But although we won the battle, and it *was* a battle, too, we lost fourteen killed and twenty-nine wounded, and alas! among the former I had to mourn my darling Min-ne-tee.

Whenever I got near a stray Crow after that, you bet I let daylight inter his system slick!

# AN ARCTIC TRAGEDY.



"AVAST! HAVE YOUR WISH."

# AN ARCTIC TRAGEDY.

ON one occasion I went as far north in my van as Dundee, and among the old whalers heard some very strange yarns, but many of them were so palpably "built" for the edification of southron tourists that I quickly became tired of them. Still, I was aware that many of the startling "hummers" had a foundation of truth in them, and as I wished to hear a good Arctic story of an authentic kind, I had no alternative but to select a victim and command him, while under my hypnotic control, to relate some thrilling experience of his life.

At the docks I made the acquaintance of several real old whalers—men who from years of Arctic fishing had become as much saturated with oil as the old seamen of Nelson's time were with tar and salt.

Tough as pin-wire, and as impervious to cold as white bears, these men are walking libraries of fiction—fiction of a kind so interesting to tourists and the ordinary

land-lubber that it is usually good enough to secure the teller a drink of "Mountain Dew"; but to one who analyses a story many of them are so dreadfully thin as to appear but muslin in texture, and, like walnuts, are more easily digested with a pinch of salt.

One old fellow who sat on the hatch-coaming of a lumpy old brig, smoking his pipe, took my fancy, and I judged from the very first glance at the man that he was stored with yarns, so, with a common-place remark or two, I went aboard and sat near him on some loose spars as if anxious to watch his mode of working a "fendoff."

He was a bulky old chap, with a forehead filled with wrinkles like a piece of corduroy, deep-sunk merry eyes, round red cheeks, and a wide mouth whose corners were always on the twitch with their owner's spoken and unspoken ideas of fun and strange sayings.

He was a most lively old whaler, but very profane in his speech, still, as he promised to become the teller of a good story, I was obliged to overlook that little eccentricity.

Twenty-four voyages to the Arctic Seas had that man been, and—well, I needed no more—for my purpose he was perfect. He had made a little money during his whaling voyages, but had become so wed to the sea that instead of settling down in some quiet little cottage, he had actually purchased the little vessel on which he sat, and was now contentedly engaged in short coasting trips.

That night, in my quiet caravan, he related to me the following curious incident, which happened some forty years since. The profanity of the gallant whaler being abnormal, I have had to tone down his narrative and couch it in my own language.

## The Story as Told to Me.

WHEN sixteen years of age, I made my first voyage to the Northern Seas, as an apprentice aboard the *Aurora*, Captain William Lennox. Being my first, it was also my most pleasant voyage, for every sight and incident was new to me, and my three fellow apprentices being sprightly lads, there was plenty of fun on every conceivable occasion.

Our crew was composed principally of Dundonians and Shetlanders, but we also carried four Englishmen, three Norwegians, and a Fin. As a crew we worked harmoniously, and every man was on good terms with his messmate, except in one instance.

There were two men who never appeared to hit it together, and who were always at loggerheads; these were two of the harpooners, Dick Milton, an Englishman, and Norrie Larrison, a Norwegian.

The former was a sturdy fellow, with dark curly hair and ruddy complexion, the liveliest fellow in the ship, a good seaman, and a plucky fellow either aloft, alow, or in a boat, but from the very day Norrie Larrison came aboard at Tromsö, Milton took a great dislike to him. Possibly it was a form of professional jealousy, for the sturdy Englishman jeered the idea of a small man like

Norrie being able to drive a harpoon home into a whale in an effective manner, and averred that he was a much better hand at putting a knife into a joint of salt junk than a lance into a "right" whale. Anyway, be the reason what it might they could never agree, but were always doing little things to annoy each other, and on board ship, where a number of men are constantly together, unpleasant tricks are played every day.

I must say that we apprentices were in no way idle in this respect, but were always concocting some practical joke by which either Norrie or Dick were annoyed by being made the victim, the said victim "taking it out" of his innocent messmate whenever he had an opportunity.

Many persons imagine the Arctic regions, even in summer, to be so intensely cold as to occasion great personal inconvenience and even hardship to those who navigate their open waters, but such an idea is erroneous, for during the whaling season the seamen regard it no more than a brisk winter's day in the British Isles, indeed, the following little joke will show that the men trouble but little about the cold of the Arctic Circle in ordinary weather.

It was our practice, when on the fishing ground, that each man, on retiring to his bunk, undressed and rolled his clothes up, fastening them together with his waist strap, the bundle being deposited in a handy place, that it might be snatched up instantly upon a whale being discovered, the watch in that case shouting down the

companion, "A fall! a fall!" and hurriedly waking the sleeping boats' crew.

Each man slept in a flannel suit—pyjamas as they are now termed—and when called to "a fall" did not stop to dress, but sprang up and hurried in his sleeping garments to his allotted boat.

One night, when Dick and Norrie were soundly asleep, I stole quietly to the former's bundle, and took from it a very necessary garment, and dropped it stealthily into Norrie's chest, which stood at the side of his bunk.

I imagined there would be some fun when the watch was changed, but it did not work out quite as I had anticipated, for I had scarcely gone properly to sleep again when the boatswain roared down the companion: "Tumble up there, you lubbers, a fall! a fall!! Be smart, men! Come on, don't stop to curl your hair or clean your teeth. Tumble out and be, etc., etc."

Out of our cosy bunks we sprang, each man with his bundle of clothes under his arm, rushing up the companion to the frosty deck as if Old Clootie were at his heels.

Tossing their bundles into their appointed boat, the men manned the falls, and in a couple of minutes the sharp-bowed boats were shooting like arrows from the side of the barque.

No one stopped to dress, but each boat's crew strained every nerve to be first alongside the whale, and secure the talent money which is always awarded for the first

harpoon sent home into the whale's huge bulk, and for each keen lance subsequently thrust into its stinking hide.

I was in Dick Milton's boat, which was the first to reach "blubber"; but knowing the trick I had played on him, I cannot say I took such hearty interest in the proceedings as I otherwise should have done. I felt as if I were standing at the edge of a mine which might explode at any minute.

Dick stood in the bows of the boat, with his heavy harpoon carefully balanced in his huge paw, and his mighty arm raised aloft—a model fit for a sculptor—for his brawny limbs showed themselves through his scanty covering of tight-fitting flannel. His head was bare, and his shirt-tail flapped in the cool breeze, while his left hand wagging behind him signalled to me to direct the men how to pull.

"Steady men!" "Avast pulling!" I cried, as I narrowly watched Dick's movements.

Then, deep down into the carcase of the mighty whale darted the barbed head of the harpoon, simultaneous with the cry of: "Stern all! Back with a will, lads!" yelled by Dick in stentorian tones.

Then, with an awful plunge that threatened to capsize us, down went the mighty monster into the black waters —our first whale had sounded with Dick's harpoon sent firmly home.

It would be some time before the animal would again

come to the surface, and in the meantime bundles were unstrapped and clothes donned.

Dick and another had to watch the line as it ran out, *and if necessary bend on another or cut it with an axe if a kink occurred, and were consequently the last to crawl into their duds!*

By-and-by the whirling rope was seen to be paying out of the tub very slowly, indicating that the whale had gone as deep down as it could plunge, and then came Dick's turn to dress.

"Keep an eye on the line," said he to one of the men, "while I slip on my trousers and frock, and you, Bob, lay hold of the lances ready to hand them to me when 'Old Blubber' rises, and that won't be long, I reckon, for the line is no longer running from the barrel."

The bundles were quickly unstrapped, but lo! poor Dick's trousers were missing!

"By thunder," he roared, "that's that son of a cow, Larrison! Wait a bit, I'll make things level with him, you mark me, boys! I thought the squinting son of a bumaree had—Look out, lads! Give me the lances, quick! Give way, boys! Lay into it!" and off we went to give the whale his quietus with the long glittering lances; but Larrison's boat was first alongside, and after he had twice lanced the great animal, down it went for the second time, spouting up blood mingled with water from its blow hole.

Dick Milton's face was a sight to watch, and created a lot of amusement in our boat to all but myself, for I could

now see that my joke was likely to have an unpleasant ending either to Norrie or myself.

In due time we captured our first whale, and secured it alongside the barque, after which operation all hands were piped to breakfast.

Dick had taken no harm from being trouserless during our pull to the ship, for he had taken an oar and by pulling made himself quite warm enough.

On going aboard he searched for his lost "bags," and as Captain Lennox required me to wait upon him, I had no opportunity of removing the plaguey things from Larrison's chest; the consequence was that Dick opened the receptacle and found his missing trousers there.

Of course everyone abroad had heard of Dick's loss, and expected a scene when the discovery was made in Norrie's chest, but Dick only shook his fist at the Norwegian and gave him warning to look out for squalls, as he intended "levelling up" at the very first opportunity.

Norrie, of course, protested his innocence, and spoke of putting it before the captain, but the men persuaded him not to blab or it might be worse for him. He, accordingly, held his peace.

After breakfast, the flensing (cutting off the blubber) commenced, in which operation Dick and Norrie took principal parts, and everything was proceeding in the usual fashion, all hands being up to their eyes in happiness and oil, when several voices sang out at the same moment, "Man overboard! Man overboard!!"

Those not actually standing on the carcase of the whale rushed to the bulwarks, and there, struggling in the water as it lapped against the slimy hide of the whale, was Norrie Larrison. True he could swim, but the intensely cold water made him gasp as he vainly strove to find something about the whale to lay hold of, and his spuffling and plunging made the flensers hold their sides, with laughter, at his awkward movements.

A rope was very quickly hove over to him, which he grasped, and was hauled upon the whale once more to a part where his spiked boots found a firm footing.

His blood was aroused, and he glared about for some instrument with which to attack his enemy, for Dick Milton had, as a set-off for the hiding of his trousers, deliberately knocked the Norwegian into the sea.

Unfortunately, a flensing knife was the first object to hand, and that Norrie seized and made for Dick, who was working with a similar implement near the shoulders of the whale.

Now a flensing knife is a terrible instrument, having a handle about four feet long, and a blade of about a yard of keen steel—a weapon as terrible as a two-handed sword.

As the Norwegian, uttering loud oaths, advanced, with glaring eyes, Dick saw that he meant mischief, and stood upon his guard, by throwing himself into an attitude of defence so as to be able to parry the impending blow.

It was a terrible moment for him, and sent a thrill of horror through the assembled crew.

With as wild a rush as he could give on such a treacherous footing, Norrie aimed a chopping blow at Dick's head, which the latter parried as well as he was able with the wooden handle of his flensing knife.

The blade of Norrie's knife sank deep into the handle of Milton's, shearing off his left forefinger as if it had been but the tip of a carrot; indeed, so painlessly was the member disunited, that Dick was not aware of his loss till some minutes afterwards.

Again Norrie raised his murderous blade to strike, but before he could bring it down upon his messmate's head, a wooden bucket, hurled by the captain, struck him in the ribs, and for the second time he had to swim for his life in the terribly cold sea.

This time the men were not so eager to fish him out.

"Let him have time to cool," said Captain Lennox, "his mad blood will soon simmer down."

When Norrie Larrison was hauled aboard, the captain gave him a cup of hot cocoa, and sent him below to change his wet clothing, an order the Norwegian very willingly obeyed, for wet clothes in a temperature only a couple of degrees above freezing is decidedly uncomfortable, if not dangerous.

When he had made himself presentable, the captain called the whole crew aft to elicit from them the cause of such a murderous attack, and probably to punish the man who had caused such a terrible scene, which would

doubtless have had a fatal termination had not the captain's lucky shot with the bucket prevented further mischief.

The story of the missing trousers was told, and Dick very naturally laid the blame upon Norrie, which the Norwegian in turn denied, and gave Dick the lie direct.

No one had seen the trousers extracted, and the captain was sadly perplexed, when, seeing everyone in a fix all round through my foolish joke, I suddenly stepped out, to the amazement of all, and confessed that I was the culprit, and alone to blame.

I was a favourite with all aboard, but discipline had to be maintained, even though the vessel was but a greasy whaler. The captain had my wrists seized up to the shrouds, and with his own hands laid on a round dozen with a pliable piece of three-inch rope. I do not think he was unduly severe in his handling of the rope's end, but for several days I was obliged to eat my meals standing.

After the bleeding from Dick's finger had been stopped, the stump was bound up in pork-lard, and Captain Lennox thus addressed the men:

"My lads, I am sorry to see any ill-feeling shown by anyone aboard my vessel, and must see that it does not continue. Here are we, forty or fifty souls, far from the haunts of men, and for our own sakes and the general safety of us all, we should be as a band of brothers; not a thought of enmity should exist in the minds of any of us.

"Now lads, I must tell you, there must be no more quarrels among you, or I shall certainly exercise my authority and severely punish those who take part in it. Milton, step out here!"

Dick stepped out, looking very sheepish.

"I am ashamed of you, Milton," continued the skipper. "Such a smart hand as you should, as chief harpooner, set an example to the whole crew, and not vent your spite by pitching a man into the sea—especially as you have since found that he was innocent. Norrie Larrison, step out."

Dick muttered something about "sorry," and "temper getting his master," etc., and turned red as a turkey's wattles as Norrie stepped out beside him.

"Yes, and you are a nice example to the ship's company," continued the captain, eying Norrie from head to foot. "Why, man, you may congratulate yourself that you are not now in irons for murder instead of having maimed a messmate for life."

"I'll forgive him, Cap.," broke in Dick, "and there's my hand on it. Tip us your flipper, messmate!" said he, turning to the Norwegian, who scowled, but reluctantly proffered his hand; and thus, before the whole ship's company, my folly, which had caused the loss of Dick's finger, was forgiven.

All now settled down, and everything went well, and we soon had another whale alongside, but after that we met with but little luck. The water being open, we steered

through Lancaster Sound into Barrow Strait, until we reached Cornwall Island, off which we met with such grand luck among the "right" whales that the captain had a large hut built on the shore of a sheltered bay, and sent to it, by boats, all the 'tween deck lumber, so as to make more room for casks, sealskins, whalebone, and other products of the icy North.

At length, after five weeks' stay, we had filled up to the beams—our skipper's best voyage in twenty-five years—and orders were given to bring everything worth carrying home from the hut to the deck of the ship, where every available bit of space was utilised.

During our trip we had seen numbers of white bears, but so far had not secured a single one; and as the captain had promised to bring back white bear robes for two or three friends, he thought this a fitting opportunity to send a couple of hands in search of the big game, whilst the crew made all snug on board for the long homeward voyage.

Milton and Larrison being accounted the best shots were selected for the task, and I, at Milton's request, was allowed to accompany them as "grub bearer and general help," a capacity with which I was delighted, for a good run ashore after months on shipboard is quite as much a luxury as if one had just been released from prison after a long incarceration.

The island was unusually rough and hummocky; great masses of rock standing out here and there beyond the

general surface of the undulating ground, giving ample cover for bears, who love a rocky, cavernous country.

The two men, although not "friends" in the common acceptance of the word, were still on fairly good terms with each other, but the surly disposition of the Norwegian had, since the affair of the trousers and flensing knives, kept the two men at a respectable distance, and there was, if nothing more, a marked reserve between them. Still, they had received the skipper's order, and must carry it out.

About two hours after leaving the hut we saw our first bear. He strolled leisurely across an open space between two masses of rock at about two hundred yards from our position.

Waiting till the huge beast had passed out of sight, the two hunters used all despatch in gaining the nearest rock, up which they clambered so as to obtain close shots from a secure position.

I stayed behind, somewhat dreading them missing or only wounding the animal, in which case I might be made a scapegoat upon which the infuriated bear might wreak his vengeance and make a meal of me.

Up they climbed, slipping and sliding upon the treacherous surface, until they gained the summit, and peered over. Then I saw Norrie point below and beckon Dick to his side. Then came a pause, which ended in both men placing their muskets to their shoulders and firing almost at the same instant.

I trembled with excitement as I watched the two puffs of smoke. Then I saw an uncertain movement as if they meditated clambering down, but they changed their minds and hastily loaded again. Dick charged his piece first, and placing it to his shoulder, again fired.

A second later, up went his cap in the air, as he shouted to me, "Come on, boy! we've bagged him. Hurrah!"

Away I scampered over the frozen ground, and on reaching the two hunters, found they had killed an immense male bear.

A drink, and something to eat, as we sat on the carcase to keep us warm, and then Dick and Norrie continued their march, leaving me behind to skin the animal as best I could, a task I did not quite relish, as at best it is a very dirty and bloody job.

I set to work manfully enough with my big knife, ever and anon taking a look at the fast diminishing forms of my messmates, and wondering what would happen to me if Mrs. Bear should scent me out whilst they were absent. In half-an-hour I saw them disappear behind a huge mass of upstanding rock, and a few minutes later the boom of a single gun came to my ear.

"A lucky shot," thought I, "they've killed another at the first discharge."

I again became interested in my work, and did not look up for some minutes, when I was surprised to see one of the men returning—it was Norrie, by his size and gait.

When he reached me, instead of confirming my surmise of having killed another bear, he suddenly pointed his gun at my head, and with a diabolical expression upon his countenance, asked me:

"Can you keep a secret, younker?"

"Yes," I replied, scarcely knowing what I said.

"Then," he continued, "Milton has fallen through a hole in the ice, and is drowned. You have seen nothing, and heard nothing—do you understand?"

I assented, trembling in every limb.

"No gun has been fired—you know nothing of Milton or me after we left you. Swear that, boy! and if you dare blab a word of what you think, I'll rip you up as I would this bear."

Suiting the action to his words, he drew his great knife, and plunged it into the bare stomach of the animal I had partially skinned.

I was petrified with fear, and swore I knew nothing, and would say nothing but what he had told me.

On returning to the ship after an absence of some five or six hours, Norrie Larrison informed the skipper of what had happened, which greatly upset Captain Lennox, as Dick Milton was a favourite with all aboard, and his untimely end cast a gloom over our homeward voyage, which we commenced next day.

In due course we reached Tromsö, where we landed Larrison and his compatriots, and reached across the

North Sea to Dundee, which was quite *en fête* at our welcome arrival, full to the hatches.

* * * *

*I did not go another whaling voyage for a long time after this very successful trip, as my employer required* my services in the timber trade, between the Baltic and various English ports.

In due course I finished my apprenticeship, and was ready for my first voyage as second mate; when one day, being home for a few days in Dundee, who should I run against but Captain Lennox, my old skipper, who cordially invited me to his house to have what we Scotsmen call a "crack"—a quiet chat.

Well, the long and the short of it was, he prevailed upon me to sign with him for another whaling voyage. He was going out in a new vessel, called *The Glory of the Seas*, and as it was five years since I had sailed my first memorable voyage with him, I was anxious to visit the old scenes once more.

Five or six of the old crew were still with Captain Lennox, all of whom were pleased to see me a rung higher on the ladder of life than when I parted with them five years before.

Away went *The Glory*, N.E. to Tromsö, where the captain usually secured several old hands used to Arctic work; but imagine my surprise, when in reply to our signal, Norrie Larrison came off in a big shore boat as one of the harpooners for the cruise.

I recognised him in a moment, the same sharp, sinister features, and restless deep-set eyes; but he evidently did not know me, for I was now Mr. Halkin, the second mate, whereas on my first voyage I was simply Joe, the apprentice.

I wanted to watch this man — as I thoroughly believed him to be the murderer of my old messmate, Dick Milton. So that he might not suspect me in any way, I spoke to each of the old hands quietly, telling them I did not wish Larrison to know who I was for a special reason, but did not reveal my object.

To the captain I related the facts, so far as I knew them, of Dick's death, and of Norrie's threats to me as I crouched by the dead bear, of my more than suspicion that Milton had been foully done to death.

On reaching the fishing ground, we had bad luck; we saw but one whale during three weeks, which we struck, but it sounded, and breaking the line got away, so that we did not see it again.

This season, the sea was again remarkably free from ice, and we sailed away N.W. to within 100 miles of Cornwall Island, where we had built the hut five years previously, and where poor Milton met with his untimely and suspicious death.

Very strange, but this was the nearest Captain Lennox had been to the spot since I had sailed with him five years before, although he had not missed a season's fishing, but the pack ice and other circumstances had prevented him.

"Why not take a peep at the old hut, Captain?" I remarked, one day, as we cruised in the neighbourhood of Cornwall Island. "If you do, I would much like to visit the spot where poor Milton is said to have lost his life by falling through a hole in the ice. I cannot see what place there was for him to fall through and be drowned, as the spot is quite four miles from the sea, and there are no rivers there."

"All right, my boy, go, and welcome," and he immediately had the ship's head put straight for the place we had christened "Fill-up Bay," as it was there we put the last of our cargo aboard.

Next day, we anchored in the deep water of the bay, and I took a couple of hands with the supposed object of visiting the hut, and to have a shot at a bear.

As I came forward to get into the boat I saw Norrie gazing intently at the hut perched conspicuously on the shore, and looking him full in the face, said:

"Now, Norrie, you are a good hand at a bear, why not join us? We are going to the very spot where you shot the monster, five years since."

The Norwegian was taken aback, and betrayed some emotion, mumbling out an awkward kind of excuse, for, as a rule, the men are only too glad to get a run ashore, and stretch their limbs.

I said nothing, but noted the pallor upon the man's face when I mentioned "the very spot," and, somehow, I had a vague idea that Norrie would meet with the just

punishment for his crime before many days were over; but that was, of course, a mere fancy.

On landing, I visited the hut, which was precisely as we had left it five years before, not a thing had been moved; indeed, such is the lack of animal life in this frigid region, that the very crumbs left from the men's last meal ashore lay untouched upon the table; no mice, nor even insects, had been enticed by them, and upon the same table were the ashes from a tobacco pipe which the last of the crew had tapped upon it before strolling down to the boat for the last time.

After a short time, I and my two men strode away over the rocky waste due North, to where, at a distance of about four miles, we could discern a solitary rock, which loomed up large and distinct in the keen, clear atmosphere.

I fully believed Dick Milton had been murdered, five years before, behind that mass.

When within a couple of hundred yards of the spot, I shot my third white fox, and ordered the men to skin it while I approached the cliff-like rock to see if I could obtain a shot at something larger.

A strange feeling seized me as I neared the steep side of the mass—a feeling of impending danger or trouble, which caused me to pause, and pull myself together, before venturing round to see what might be upon the other side.

What I saw fully accounted for my strange premonition, and gave me every reason to suppose that my

messmate, Dick Milton, had been murdered on this spot five summers before.

*Rejoining my men, we turned towards the ship, and as we stumbled along over the nubbly surface, which was of* an ankle-breaking description, one of the men noticed, with surprise, that I was shouldering two rifles instead of one.

"Yes," I remarked, "it is a queer thing to find a rifle in such a desolate place as this, but 'they who hide can find,' not that I hid this one, but I expected there was one to be found where I looked, and as you see, I was not disappointed. Now lads, I want you to make me a promise not to say anything about this strange rifle to anyone on board, and I think I can safely promise you will hear something startling about it in a few days."

The men gave their promise, and on our return to the vessel I had a long consultation with the captain and first mate, and in the end we concerted a plan by which we might make Norrie Larrison confess if he really did murder Dick Milton or no.

On the third day the captain organised a grand hunting party, in which everyone but three hands were to take part, the said three being two of them too old for a long tramp, and the third the possessor of a wooden leg—a possession which the Esquimaux of Greenland looked upon with wonder and awe, especially as the owner had had the lower six inches made to unscrew, so that he could put on another section made of a piece of gun barrel, which for fun he could load and fire off like a pistol.

Ashore we all tumbled, twelve of us, armed with rifles or muskets—the ship's entire armament—and the rest with just what weapons they could lay hands on, the boys' armament being a very needful store of provisions.

During the forenoon we secured one bear, by firing a volley into him at a distance of about fifty yards, and although only three balls struck him, we dropped him in his tracks.

He was a fine fellow, and his "wife" stood by him in a most furious rage. Now was the time for axes, flensing knives, harpoons, clubs, and dogs.

Bruin stood on her hind legs, and actually killed three of our four dogs with her huge paws before our people could reload their pieces.

Two shots were hurriedly fired by the first two who loaded, but although fired at close range both missed, and the would-be bear-slayers were loudly laughed at by their messmates.

"Hold on, lads," cried our chief harpooner, stepping forward, "let me have a shot with my little gun."

"Go ahead, then, Tom," shouted the skipper, "your steel is better than our lead!"

Tom advanced cautiously towards the bear, who looked a mighty creature as she reared herself on her hind legs, and towered over the harpooner, her green eyes appearing like two scintillating emeralds, and her jaws trembling with rage, as long drops of viscid moisture trailed from them.

She moved forward to meet the intrepid Tom, who presently halted, and calmly poising his keen harpoon, sent it with a mighty effort clean through the chest of the terrible beast, who plunged forward, and fell with the blood gushing from her nostrils, never to rise again.

"Whoop!" yelled Tom, cutting a caper, "that's a bull's-eye and no mistake."

*"Bravo, Tom!" exclaimed the skipper, "the skin's mine, but that and the glory are yours. Bravely done, upon my* word."

*That* was a sovereign.

At noon we were halted at a ledge of rock which gave us shelter from the wind, and there we sat and had our meal.

"Hungry as hunters?"

That term does not express a man's feelings after four hours' tramp in those latitudes, for every man of us was as hungry as *two* hunters.

Norrie sat apart. He looked haggard and cadaverous, and his eyes were ever and anon bent upon the huge rocky mass, half a mile away, behind which two men five years previously had wandered and only one of them returned. Norrie's remembrance was turned to that event as his eyes involuntarily turned to the rock, and the food he took required a great deal of mastication before he could swallow it—it appeared to stick in his throat.

I sat by the skipper, and we both narrowly watched Norrie while we held a whispered conversation as to the

carrying out of a plan we had prepared for a trial of Norrie's guilt.

The captain, after a time, complained of feeling tired, and desired me to go forward, with Evans the harpooner, and rig up a wind screen behind the big rock: he would have a rest while we younger men enjoyed ourselves hunting.

*This was part of our preconceived plan.*

"Take a blanket and a couple of boat hooks," said the skipper, "and when all have finished their rations, we will follow on, and catch you up."

Evans and I went forward as desired and rigged up a screen, behind which the skipper could sit and wrap himself up for a snooze if he chose, and we had hardly finished our allotted task, and another (of which more anon), when the merry party rounded the rock.

"Halt awhile, my lads," said the captain. "I wish to say a few words to you before you wander away in search of big game. I have something on my mind I should like to clear up before you all."

He took his seat, with his back to the wind-screen we had erected, and called for Norrie Larrison.

Norrie stood out from the circle of his surrounding messmates, who, all agog, were asking each other what was in the wind.

"Now, Larrison," said Captain Lennox, fixing his gaze upon the Norwegian, who stood a few feet from him, apparently very ill at ease. "I believe, hereabouts, is

the spot at which your fellow harpooner, Milton, met with his death just five years since?"

Larrison stammered assent.

"Now," continued the captain, "I want you to describe to me the manner of his death—for Richard Milton was an old favourite of mine, having accompanied me to these regions no less than seven seasons. I would once more, on the very spot, like to hear the particulars of the fatal—eh—accident."

Larrison made a very rambling statement, to which those standing around paid eager attention, for very few of them had heard of the sudden disappearance of poor Dick Milton.

Captain Lennox eyed Norrie narrowly as he proceeded with his narrative, and the Norwegian gradually gathered courage as he floundered along with his lying statements. Presently he spoke of poor Dick crying out to him for help.

"He was about twenty or thirty yards from me when he broke through the ice, with his gun still in his hand. He could not swim, and dropped his gun just as I reached the edge of the hole, and I saw it sink, and then, before I could aid my poor messmate, he gave a loud cry, and sank before my very eyes. I could not——"

"Wait a little, Larrison," interrupted the captain. "Tell me, please, whereabouts the lake, or pool, or river was situated in which Milton met with his death?"

Larrison had forgotten the precise spot, but thought it must be about a couple of miles from where he now stood."

"Do you remember an apprentice lad named Joe, who accompanied you on the occasion in question?

"Yes. He stopped behind to skin a bear."

"And did you shoot anything before you returned to where you left the boy?"

"No," answered Norrie, in a hollow voice, "we neither of us fired a shot."

"Very well, Larrison, that boy told me that only about ten minutes elapsed between the time you and Milton turned the angle of the rock (beside which we now stand) and the time when, looking up from his task of skinning the bear, he saw you returning alone; and, in the meantime, he distinctly heard a shot fired. Now, Larrison, how could you and your messmate have reached a spot two miles away in those few brief minutes? and how do you account for the report of a gun being heard, coming from the direction of this rock?"

"Captain Lennox," exclaimed the now ghastly-faced harpooner, "that boy told you lies, and if he were here I would put him to the question and show him to be a liar before you all."

"Very well," I exclaimed, stepping forward, "I am that boy, though, doubtless, five years of rough life and a pretty thick beard have altered me somewhat."

The Norwegian's eyes were instantly riveted on my face, and, having gazed a few seconds, the words "It is," fell involuntarily from his trembling lips.

"Captain Lennox," fiercely exclaimed the wretched man,

"I will not submit to this, I am not on my trial for, for—murder, surely, and will not answer another question. *Years have flown since the occurrence, and my memory fails me on points of detail.*"

"*If you are an innocent man,*" said the captain, "you will quickly clear yourself by answering the questions Mr. Halkin puts to you."

This he resolutely declined to do; but, surmising that Captain Lennox could know little or nothing of the mystery, signified his willingness to answer anything the captain might ask personally.

"Very well"; and the captain, with knit brows, proceeded: "You saw the gun, which Milton carried, sink in a pool situated some two miles from here. Should you know the gun if you ever saw it again?"

"Yes, it had R.M. burnt on the stock."

"Produce the weapon, Mr. Halkin."

I handed the gun to the captain, who continued:

"Here is Milton's gun, with the letters R.M. branded upon the stock. Mr. Halkin found it upon the very spot on which you now stand, *only two days since.* How do you account for that?"

"It's a lie," savagely exclaimed the guilty man.

"You say so," remarked the captain, "but I believe it to be the truth!"

"Tell me now, how came Milton's watch in your possession? The poor fellow had it in his fob when he left the lad skinning the bear, for he told him the time by

it, and remarked that you and he would return in less than two hours. How did you become possessed of that watch?"

*The wretched man looked from face to face as if seeking* for help from his messmates, his hands in the meantime working convulsively, and the perspiration standing on his forehead in great drops. His parted, bleached lips were drawn back, showing his clenched teeth, and as, like a hound at bay, he turned his head from point to point, a sudden inspiration struck him.

"Who says I had Dick's watch?"

"I do," said the boatswain, coming forward, and exhibiting the large old pinchbeck timepiece.

"I bought it of you, you lubber, only a fortnight since, and giv' you a half-sovereign and them trousers that you now have on for it, so don't lie about it, Norrie."

"Who says it was ever Dick's watch? Has no one else in the world a watch?" queried the Norwegian, catching like a drowning man at a straw.

The boatswain handed the watch to the captain, who, at his bidding, opened the outer case, in which was clearly engraved: RIC. MILTON.

"Can you explain this?" said the captain, handing the watch to Larrison, who mechanically thrust out his palsied hand to take it.

He was foiled at every point, and, in his despair, changed his tactics. Gathering himself up for a final effort, he dashed his fur cap on the snow, and like a madman,

shrieked, rather than spoke, denunciation to everyone concerned.

"You—curs! You —— curs!" he yelled, "you would accuse me of murdering my old messmate, and have laid your infernal heads together to bring me, if you can, to the gallows.

"You have stamped a gun and a watch, and bring them as evidence against me. I am no murderer, and if Dick Milton were here now he would quickly declare my innocence, and be the first to extend to me the helping hand of friendship! If I could call the spirit of Dick Mil——"

What he would have said was cut short by the captain thundering out:

"Avast! have your wish, you —— murderer."

And as he spoke, he snatched down the blanket which had acted as a wind-screen, and, behold, there stood the mortal remains of Dick Milton, in the position we had propped it, frozen stiff and stark, and in almost a perfect state of preservation. The eyes were open, the jaw had dropped, and the right arm was extended to the front in its frozen state as if pointing directly at Norrie and accusing him of the heinous crime.

Norrie reeled like a drunken man, and sinking to his knees, held up his hands in ineffable horror.

"Forgive me, Dick! Oh, God, forgive me! I did it! I did it!! Mercy—have mercy on me—I confess!!!

"Oh, take him away! he grins at me in triumph—look

at his eyes, they pierce my very soul. Save me! Save me! I——" and then the horrified wretch fell forward on his face, insensible.

* * * *

Poor Dick was buried on the spot where he had been shot — shot at close quarters *in the back*, as his singed clothes and a gaping wound testified.

Norrie Larrison only escaped lynching by the resolute protest of Captain Lennox, who had him conveyed on board the barque, where he was placed in irons in the hold.

The men at once set to work and broke open Norrie's chest to ascertain if any further evidence of his guilt remained besides the watch, but nothing more of an incriminating nature was found.

Some of the younger men took some of his old clothing and manufactured an effigy of the unhappy man and ran it up to the yardarm, where the older hands averred Norrie himself ought to be.

The captain saw the dangling figure and frowned, but thinking it might to some extent appease the savage feelings of the men, allowed it to hang there, making no comment.

"To-morrow, my men," he observed, "we must get into harness again; to-day has been a strange one, but when we arrive home, Norrie shall have a just trial, and I trust a just punishment.

"Aye, aye, skipper," growled the old boatswain, "if he

don't slip through our fingers, and escape. A block and fall I say for such as he. Surely, his own confession is good enough to swing him ?"

* * * *

Next morning, Captain Lennox rose early, and upon coming on deck, naturally cast his eye upon the dangling effigy at the yardarm.

He started, and walked forward towards it, peering up at the swaying object, as it hung in the brilliant light.

It was no dummy ; it was all that remained of the real Norrie Larrison.

Dick's messmates had avenged him.

# THE BRAVE SIR OLIVER.



"Still the King Prayed."

# THE BRAVE SIR OLIVER.

WISHING greatly to hear what progress my friend Dr. Grimmery had made with his experiments in materialising spirit forms, I prevailed upon him to pay me another visit whilst I was in the neighbourhood of Bournemouth, where he was staying to recuperate his somewhat enfeebled health —a result of burning too much midnight oil and excessive mental strain.

"Old friend," said he, "there is nothing like an entire change by the seaside, with its ozone-laden atmosphere and absence of worry, to pick a man up when he has been working day and night for a long period, with both head and hands, to achieve a certain result. Dear me, how I have worked during the past three months! Aye, and what unheard-of results have rewarded my labours!"

The Doctor's face lighted up with triumph, as he chuckled, "Won't the scientific world be dumfounded when I divulge my secret of materialisation, and the mode of communication

with persons who have been dead centuries and their very individuality forgotten? Why, they will look upon me as a very electric light of knowledge among their puny tallow-candle discoveries from vivisection and kindred fields of research!"

And he laughed a deep rumbling laugh of satisfaction.

Of course I expressed my great delight to hear the Doctor speak so highly of his discoveries, and naturally asked him in what direction these startling revelations opened up new scientific ground.

"My dear fellow," was his reply; "you will be surprised when I tell you that only last week I not only conversed with a man who died in 1209, but actually shook hands with him, and handled the armour in which he was clothed.

"My visitor was a fine young fellow from the spirit world (produced by my inventions and skill), dressed in complete armour, who sat with me in my laboratory on several occasions, and so material had he become at his last visit that to ease his limbs he removed several pieces of his armour. I even lifted them from the table and felt that they were genuine, solid, ringing steel; yet a few minutes after I saw those cumbrous pieces of metal fade and melt away and vanish into nothingness!"

"How wonderful!" I exclaimed. "And did you speak to this man?"

"Speak? Why, he told me nearly his whole history, and a very interesting recital it was."

"Dear me, Doctor, and should I be seeking too much if I asked you to spin me this strange yarn, for I know you have a most tenacious memory?"

"Well, I should have much pleasure in doing so, but it is a long story, and do you know just now I feel very happy and contented after the capital meal you have placed before me, and to tell the truth I feel too drowsy to think. In fact I feel as if forty winks would do me a great d al of good. I must apologise for—my—rudeness—but—ah! sleepy—um!" and with a final grunt he was off into a sleep which out of deference to his desire I had surreptitiously imposed upon him.

In his hypnotic state the Doctor was then good enough to recapitulate the following story as he heard it from the lips of Sir Oliver Lacy himself. I merely suggested that he should do so by adverting to what he had already touched upon. I simply continued the conversation by remarking, "Now, Doctor, that you are comfortably settled, will you be good enough to state what occurred between you and Sir Oliver Lacy on the occasion of his last visit to you?"

Doctor Grimmery, after moistening his lips with his tongue, as a man does when he is about to sing or make a speech, commenced as follows:—

## The Story as Told to Me.

ONLY last week I sat by my laboratory table comfortably puffing my cigar, whilst *tête-à-tête* with me sat a man in complete armour. It was the *materialised form* of Sir Oliver Lacy, who died in 1209, and had, at my bidding, and with the aid of my Ethogram and Morpheoscope, again visited the earth.

He appeared to be a man of about thirty-three or thirty-four years of age, tall in stature and ample of limb, but his handsome bronzed face gave no indication of having lain in the grave for nearly seven centuries.

"You have just half an hour," I remarked complacently, "in which to tell me, briefly, the story of your life, which, hearing it from your own lips, will no doubt be of great interest to me, and I am sure you will pardon me if I should interrupt you to ask a question now and again. We modern people are somewhat hazy on many points concerning mediæval customs, and now will be my opportunity to set obscure points right. Kindly proceed."

The knight commenced:—

"I was the son of Sir John Lacy, of Dubridge Castle, Somerset, and from my early youth was brought up to the use of arms. The castle being in the neighbourhood of Cleeve Abbey, I had ample opportunity of receiving what

was in those days considered a liberal education, for the monks and I agreed remarkably well.

"My morning was usually spent in the castle precincts, where one Wolff de Burgh initiated me into the mysteries of military deportment and discipline, teaching me the use of the weapons in vogue in those days.

"I commenced with the crossbow, with which weapon I quickly became proficient, and soon learnt to hit a wooden cock, set up on a staff a hundred yards away, three times out of six shots, which was reckoned good shooting, though I must confess the effigy was a somewhat large bird.

"By my command of this weapon I ingratiated myself into the good graces of the worthy abbot and the jolly prior of Cleeve Abbey, for every week I would send them a deer which by permission I shot on my father's estate. Sometimes I would join the abbot in a hunt in Exmoor Forest, at which time we had splendid sport; so that the abbey larder and the homes of the surrounding villeins were full of good cheer.

"The quarrel, or bolt shot from the crossbow, as you are aware, was only about a foot long, but flew remarkably straight, and the advantage of it was that providing the user could wind back the string into the notch, he could, even if somewhat weak, shoot precisely as hard and true as a strong man, for the construction of the crossbow made it a purely mechanical weapon.

"Now with the long-bow, a glorious weapon, the case was different; a weak man could fire but a weak shot,

but a strong man pull the cloth yard arrow back nearly to the head, and on releasing it the feathered missile would glide away at an irresistible pace, so that I have often seen stout armour pierced quite through. The bow beyond all weapons was England's glory, and I became so proficient with it that I have often compassed a mile with four flights of an arrow.

"Then came the day when a sword was given me, and I felt quite a man, although but fourteen years of age. It was not for use, however, but simply as a mark to show my rank; I had to learn to handle a sword before I was allowed to use one.

"Wolff was my mentor, and he taught me first to use a wooden sword—how to cut and how to guard, how to husband my strength, and above all how to keep cool when hard pressed, so as not throw my chances away by fits of passion if I happened to receive a harder knock than usual.

"By-and-by the real sword was put in my hand, and I was placed before a deer which had been picked up dead. The animal was suspended from a kind of gallows, and with might and main I set to work upon it, cutting, hacking, and thrusting at it in all directions. By this means I soon learned to avoid the heavier bones, which give a sad jar to one's hand when they are struck and are very apt to sprain one's wrist.

"Another object I used to practise upon was a substantial bundle of firewood, a faggot, suspended in the

same way as the deer—and the faggot had to be hacked at until not a stick remained suspended.

"Wolff would not allow me to leave off my exercise and rest, but kept me hard at work until the perspiration ran down my cheeks and my arm felt ready to drop from my shoulder. This hard task was set me to give me endurance and patience to complete my work.

"Having become proficient with the sword, I was then taught quarterstaff, wrestling, and other exercises which brought out my skill and strength; then when I was about eighteen, a two-handed sword was put into my hands—a fearful weapon where there is space sufficient to use it, but where one is hemmed in it is useless and a positive encumbrance.

"In fighting on foot, man to man, strength to wield the weapon quickly was a *sine quâ non;* arms, heads, and limbs were shorn off at a single blow, and when a knight once obtained space among a rabble or *posse* of men-at-arms, the slaughter was fearful, nothing could resist the hissing steel in its swift and deadly flight.

"With men in armour, fighting on foot, the case was different; one had an opportunity of guarding, and the armour to a great extent withstood the blows, though it was sadly dented and spoiled. So heavy were the blows that arms and legs were frequently broken by the impact, and if a knight tired with wielding his weapons, as was frequently the case. his opponent, by watching his opportunity, would cleave his skull, even through his thick steel helmet.

"Once in Holy Land, when I had received an insult from a French knight, Cœur de Lion commanded us to fight out the grievance before him, and my opponent, in making a tremendous downward cut at me with his two-handed sword, completely missed me, and the point stuck fast in the ground. Then was my opportunity, and springing in quickly, I dealt the Frenchman such a downright blow, that his head was completely crushed in, and he reeled and fell dead at my feet without a moan.

"I was taught the use of the lance at an early age, and many was the friendly joust I had with Wolff in the tilt-yard of the castle, until with increasing age, strength, and skill, I could tumble the poor man out of his seat at nearly every bout. Wolff was nearly fifty years of age, and could not be expected to stand so many falls as when he was a younger man, although Sir John, my father, had the tilt-yard well strewn with twigs and leaves and rushes.

"Sir John was so pleased with my prowess that he would give feasts and hold mock tournaments, so that I might try my skill against the best of the surrounding young sparks. I soon became champion of the whole district, and then came the news that Richard our king was about to start upon an expedition to Holy Land, there to fight the Paynims under Sal-á-deen, and requesting all good knights to flock to his banner and aid him in the Crusade.

"Fired with the stories of Richard's valour, I eagerly

joined the ranks of the Crusaders, and we left England in a fleet of large ships which were under the care of two bishops and three knights, Richard having gone overland *viâ* Paris and Lyons to Marseilles, where we were to call and receive him *en route.*

"Most of us were dreadfully sea-sick; indeed, the sea became so rough that our fleet was greatly scattered and disabled, so that we had to put into the river Tagus, for the purpose of refitting and to give time for the dispersed fleet to collect again. I remember how thankful we were to put foot on shore, the more so that we found war being waged between the King of Portugal and the Moors.

"To help him vanquish his dusky foes, the Portuguese king, whose name was Sancho, sought our aid, which we willingly lent, and quickly drove the powerful Moors from the country; but, unfortunately, Sancho had speedy cause to regret securing our services, for many of our men, who were turbulent even when at home, broke through all restraint, pillaging the town and giving way to dreadful licentiousness, so that the wives and daughters of the citizens were not even safe in their own homes.

"Brawls and fights took place in all quarters of the city, and many of the inhabitants were killed in protecting their women-folk, so that it became dangerous for the citizens even to appear in the streets of their own city.

"To put a stop to this terrible state of anarchy, Sancho ordered the gates of the city to be closed, and such of

the Crusaders as were within the walls were made prisoners. I am glad to say I was not one of them, for although I loved fighting for a just quarrel, yet I could never be brought to such a low state as to draw sword in a wrong cause. I ever remembered my knighthood, and bore myself before both friend and foe like a true gentleman.

"As a reprisal, the Crusaders made prisoners of all the Portuguese they could lay hands on without the walls, and so matters stood when it was announced that the fleet was again ready for sea. A council was held, at which it was agreed to exchange prisoners when we were ready to sail, which was on the morrow. It is more than probable, however, that many of our truculent fellows were left to languish out their lives in Portuguese dungeons, where the merciful *misèricorde* or lingering starvation and disease ended their days.

"The voyage from Lisbon to Marseilles took us four weeks, and on arriving we found Richard so impatient at our delay that he had chartered other vessels, and embarked the troops with him, and was on the point of sailing when we appeared in sight.

"I brought with me a letter from my father to the king, and lost no time in delivering it in person.

"To my surprise I found that reading was not one of the king's accomplishments, for he handed the letter to a priest (who always accompanied him) to read to him. Cœur de Lion received me very graciously, and appointed me one

of his squires, so I had every opportunity of knowing the brave monarch both in private and public life."

"Can you describe the king to me?" broke in the Doctor.

"Yes," replied Sir Oliver, "he was not much above the medium height, but very strongly built, muscular and active, for he exercised himself daily with both sword and mace. His countenance was ruddy and his hair and beard of a warm brown; his eyes were brown and bright, and his voice deep and loud, as one would expect from such a massive chest and throat.

"At Naples the king landed, and I was chosen as one of his body-guard; and I recollect on one occasion while sojourning there, that the king, in a fit of religious fervour, paid a visit to the shrine of St. Januarius.

"I accompanied him, bearing his sword and mantle, and descended into the crypt with him, where an altar to the saint was placed. It was a terrible spot, and one likely to awe the courage of the boldest. It was more like entering a grave than a place for prayer. Round the walls were ranged scores of dead bodies of monks, which appeared to be prepared in some manner so as to arrest decay; and from the groined roof depended grinning skulls, which swayed to and fro in the draught which came in from the iron gratings placed high in the walls. At the farther side of the crypt stood a small stone altar, before which burned a tiny permanent lamp, which shed such feeble rays as to be of little service to one coming in from the light of day. The whole place was permeated

with a nauseous exhalation from the shrivelling bodies of the dead, grinning from their niches in the walls; not a sound could be heard save the occasional drip of water which had penetrated the roof at one spot, where it dropped to the ill-paved floor with such emphasis as to make itself heard exceedingly clearly, by reason of the awful stillness which reigned in the horrible place.

"The king knelt, and told his orisons to the accompaniment of the tiny drops of falling moisture; while I groped my way to an alcove in the darkest part of the building, and spread the king's mantle, upon which I sat in a very bumpy, uncomfortable manner.

"The minutes seemed hours, but the king prayed on, and as I kept my vigil I became aware that something alive was moving upon my knee, which gave me such a feeling of horror that I scarcely dare put out my hand to feel what it might be.

"It was but a slimy toad, but quite sufficient to send a thrill of revulsion through my frame.

"Still the king prayed; the light from the flickering lamp glinting down upon his upturned face, the horn of the lamp being of a greenish-blue shade, giving his countenance the hue of death.

"As I sat waiting the termination of the orisons, which appeared endless, something struck me in the face with a sounding thwack. I do not know what it was, but probably nothing but one of those loathsome large bats which so love dark holes and corners.

"I sprang to my feet, however, when the object upon which I had been sitting suddenly slipped down with a dull thud upon the floor, giving my already shaken nerves a second shock.

"I quickly recovered my self-possession, and put down my hand to recover the king's mantle, when I encountered something hard and round. I picked it up and held it between myself and the dim light, but dropped it again—it was a clammy skull with some portions of the hair and integuments still clinging to it.

"I had been sitting unknowingly in the lap of a defunct monk, and had actually broken the festering head from the rotten neck, when I snatched it from the ground to see what it was.

"The noise of the falling skull caused the king to cease praying and rise from his knees. He spoke to me, and I answered, groping as I was to disentangle his mantle from the horrid relic of humanity before me.

"To my relief Richard mounted the rocky stairs, and I followed quickly at his heels, thankful to have escaped from such a den of horrors and scaring objects. I have faced death unflinchingly by sea and land on many occasions, but have never been so unnerved as I was on the occasion of my visit to the subterranean chapel of St. Januarius. The deadliest mortal foe man can face bravely, but the actual dead and the unknown make cowards of us all. The dead seem to be environed by an

invisible spirit of reverence and awe, which frequently unnerves and makes weak the heart of man.

"For several months my royal master lingered in Italy and the island of Sicily, sometimes fighting the fierce dwellers on that island, but more often leading a life of pleasure and gaiety, giving great feasts and casting his money about him broadcast. Tournaments and feats of skill and strength succeeded each other in rapid sequence; the sounds of mirth and music resounded continually through the camps, and troubadours and jongleurs offered their songs of love and beauty, or feats of dexterity, secure of a liberal reward.

"Then came an adventure which was near ending the life of Richard Cœur de Lion, and would have done so but for my own strong right arm.

"The king was one day walking in the neighbourhood of Messina, attended only by myself, when, passing through a village, Richard saw a hawk standing before the door of a peasant's house. Now according to the law of European kings, it was forbidden common people to keep that noble bird, as hawking was solely the sport of nobles and princes.

"The king with his usual impetuosity took up the bird, caressed it, and placing it on his wrist walked complacently away with it.

"The peasant owner of the bird, although under the rule of the Norman conquerors, had not yet learned submission to such treatment, and being joined by several of his

friends, he followed us and with his knife suddenly attacked the king.

"We drew our swords and for some time kept the rudely armed peasants at bay, killing several in self-defence, but the king, in striking at a man armed with a martel-de-fer, struck the head of that weapon with his sword so forcibly that the latter broke off close to the hilt, which alone remained in his hand.

"Seizing such a favourable opportunity, the rabble pressed eagerly forward, as if sure of their prey, but I laid about me with such heartiness with my good sword that they did us no great harm.

"The king, having lost his dagger from its sheath in the *mêlée* and having no other weapon, took off his gloves of mail, and fastening them to his sword belt, swung that curiously improvised weapon round among the enemy, and so kept them at a respectful distance; for they were evidently amazed at the immense strength he had shown during the fight, two of the peasants being killed outright by buffets from the king's mailed hand.

"Thus we fought, steadily retreating to the gates of a priory hard by, the line of our route being marked by the fallen bodies of dead and wounded men.

"When within fifty yards of the priory, the gates were opened to afford us succour, but at that moment three boar hunters approached from a wayside hovel armed with spears, and in these we read our coming doom, for we were now nearly exhausted.

"A monk stood at the priory gate who shouted to us to run with might and main, and with one accord both king and subject took the kindly advice proffered, and amid a shower of stones and cudgels reached the safe shelter of the sacred house, completely exhausted and covered with wounds, blood, and bruises.

"The king in his hearty manner thanked me for having saved his life, which I undoubtedly did, for the furious mob would certainly have killed him. Had that unfortunately happened it would have quite upset the third Crusade, which would probably have been abandoned, and the whole course of history altered.

"The betrothal of the king to the beautiful Berengaria took place shortly after this occurrence, and we sailed away to the Holy Land. Of the dreadful voyage, and of our fights on the sea, of some of our vessels being wrecked on Cyprus, and of our taking the principal towns, or of how we captured the king of the island and bound him with chains of silver I have not time to relate.

"I now come to the period when the might of the Crusaders was gathered around the massive walls of Acre, and the brave Saracen garrison was at length compelled to surrender to our arms, and to give up all the Christian prisoners, together with the wood of the True Cross. Sal-à-deen agreed to pay 200,000 pieces of gold within forty days, leaving 5,000 of the principal inhabitants of Acre in our hands as hostages until their ransom was paid.

"I might tell you of the mighty deeds of Cœur de Lion,

and of how, mounted upon his huge charger (which had a beam of wood lashed to its side) he rushed in where the foe were thickest, and with his equine battering-ram and his terrible battle-axe, which weighed forty pounds, cleared passages amid the foe. This happened when the beleaguered garrison made one of their frequent sorties.

"I could tell you of my own prowess in the field, of how I again saved the king's life, and of how single-handed I fought and slew five well-armed Saracens, and of how in disguise I actually entered Acre, and being recognised, was sent back with a present by the Paynim leader instead of being beheaded as a spy, a fate which befel several other unfortunate Crusaders.

"It would all be very interesting, no doubt, but would take much too long, and coming from my own lips would appear as if I wished to vaunt my courage. I therefore refrain, and will proceed with the story, which ended in such an unexpected manner to me.

"The forty days of grace expired, but no gold came to redeem the unhappy Paynim captives, which left us no alternative but to slaughter them; this we did—a proceeding for which I had but little stomach, as it reminded me too much of killing sheep. Richard always kept his word, and this great slaughter was obligatory.

"Probably, Doctor, you nineteenth century people shudder at such a proceeding with horror, for no one in later times than the Crusaders would dream of such cold-blooded atrocities."

I thought of the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru, and of other instances, but shaking my head, and blushing deeply, made no reply, so Sir Oliver proceeded.

"From time to time we received reinforcements from France and England, and in one of the ships from my native land came one of my father's retainers with a letter for me. I hurriedly cut its sealed binding of silk, and read that my affianced bride was being subjected to the unsolicited attentions of the young Baron de Parke, whose castle was situated some twenty miles from that of my father. He had threatened to carry off my loved one by force, and my father's principal retainers being with me in the Holy Land, the garrison of Dubridge Castle would fall an easy prey to the much stronger forces of the baron, if he chose to carry out his dastardly threat. Coward! how I could have beaten the life out of him with my *martel de fer!* Two months' journey lay between my love and me, and I was maddened at the thought of what might occur during that dreadful period; a vast time, so it seemed to me, during which my mind would be racked by tormenting fears and surmises of the fate that might befall my affianced bride.

"I hurried to Cœur de Lion, begging him to grant me the boon of six months' absence, that I might return to England and meet the rascal baron in mortal combat. To my great joy the king granted my request, but would not allow me to take away my forty men-at-arms who remained of the sixty with whom I

had originally set out. Two only returned with me—the faithful Wolff, and a page.

"The voyage was a long one, and nearly two months elapsed before I rode up to my father's castle, one fine May morning, to find it closely besieged by the soldiers of Baron de Parke.

"Matters were evidently going badly with the defenders of the castle, as a body of men had commenced a fierce assault on the main entrance, and I could discern my father and his men upon the battlements, hurling down great stones, and shooting at the formidable, out-numbering foe beneath.

"What could I do with but two men to assist me?

"*I was in despair.*

"I pondered; but no helpful thought came to my distracted mind by which I could succour the brave garrison, until the idea struck me to ride forward, demand to be ushered into the presence of De Parke, and defy him to single combat, which he as a knight could not refuse.

"I was tired and weary with my long ride from Southampton, and my arms were stiff with the disuse of the past two or three months; but my heart beat high with courage and hope, as I rode resolutely forward.

"As I and my men advanced, a troop of men came galloping towards us, to the leader of whom I expressed my desire to meet the Baron de Parke face to face.

"One of them immediately spurred back towards the

castle, and in a short time the baron, attended by some score men, rode up to where I awaited him.

"He made me a mock obeisance, and taunted me for allowing my pretty bird to remain so long alone in its cage that it was in danger from the cat's claws.

"I was too exasperated to answer, but flung my glove, as a gage of battle, at the feet of his pawing steed.

"He accepted my challenge as in duty bound, and ordered one of his men to supply me with a lance.

"The level meadow in which we were assembled was but two or three hundred yards from the castle, and was bordered by a plantation of fine beach and sycamore trees—the ideal place for a tilt—and I felt certain of victory, although I was somewhat faint, having had nothing to eat since six in the morning, and it was now past noon, but I was too incensed and eager for the fray to ask the baron even for a stoup of wine.

"The men-at-arms and camp followers ranged themselves in two rows, forming a list, and to the sound of a trumpet the baron and I couched our lances and rode in deadly hatred at each other.

"I aimed my spear point at his throat, but caught him on the inside of his shoulder, turning him so backward upon his horse that I thought he must have fallen to the ground; by a great effort, however, he recovered his seat, and after a brief rest, we took position at either end of the increasing throng and once more rode at full tilt towards each other.

"I felt so certain of victory that I gave our war cry of 'St. George,' as I charged at my cowardly rival. As we approached, my horse accidentally put his foot in a hole in the ground and stumbled, causing me to lose my aim, which I had this time directed full at De Parke's breast.

"Before I could recover he was upon me, and the point of his lance finding a vantage-place between my helmet and cuirass, my chest was pierced, and I was flung from my horse stunned, bleeding, and *vanquished!*

"My faithful old Wolff, and Launce, my page, carried me to the welcome shade of a spreading sycamore tree, where they unharnessed me, but I could see by the look on the poor fellows' faces that the wound was like to prove mortal.

"My left lung was pierced and my hours were numbered. My breathing became heavy, and my lungs being gorged with blood caused my mouth to fill with a bloody foam which prevented me from speaking.

"The crowd around me were, during the afternoon, drawn off by a trumpet call, and I was left in agony with my two faithful followers.

"I signed to my page Launce to approach the castle stealthily and reconnoitre, and upon his return he informed me that the enemy were bringing up roughly improvised ladders for use in an escalade, which was to be presently undertaken.

"Several times I sent the good lad to bring me news of the fight, conscious that I must be near my end, and

upon the last visit he made me understand that the castle had been taken by assault.

"My agony of mind at the news was only equalled by my agony of body, for my breath was now coming in short gasps, and my vision becoming somewhat dim.

"Gradually the golden sun sank down in the west, the last sun I should set eyes upon, and as the shades of evening fell around, great volumes of smoke, burnished with a ruddy glow, slowly curled upward from the castle keep.

"I watched the roseate tints play upon the convolutions of the clouds of smoke, and sank into a kind of dream. I heard the fierce and exulting cries of men, and the sound of trumpets as they blared in triumph; I heard the tramp of horses' hoofs, and the sound of many voices near me. I fancied myself back in the Holy Land, and thought of the great Richard and his lovely Berengaria, and then my mind suddenly reverted to my own beloved, and then——

"My faithful Wolff's voice whispered in my drowsy ear:

"'Sir Oliver, they come!'

"'Who comes?' I thought, in my pain and bewilderment, but could not give utterance to a sound.

"I roused, once more, the flickering spark of my life into existence, and motioned to be raised into a sitting posture, with my back resting against the tree under which I was lying, while Launce bathed my fevered forehead with the cool water from a reedy pool hard by.

"All seemed confused; a mingled sound of voices; a horse neighing; torches flashing in the semi-darkness—

swaying boughs—marching men, and weeping women—and then, then—I was aware of a tall, white horse being brought to a standstill before me.

"I looked, but my eyes seemed dim; with faltering hand I wiped them with my sash, and could then see that the white horse bore a double burden—*Baron de Parke, and in his arms my lost bride!*

"My hand mechanically sought the sword usually at my left side, and I endeavoured to raise myself to my knees, but my strength was spent, the sands of my life had run. I saw the smile of contempt on my rival's face; I saw my loved one's hands bound, and a bandage of white material round her mouth.

"I looked again—I glared. I tried to cry out, but a rush of blood to my throat choked me; my brain reeled, and—*I fell back dead!*"

At the finish of his story the resuscitated knight became faint with the remembrance of his sad end, and placing his helmet upon his head, he held out his huge hand to me, and I grasped it heartily.

It was as cold as death!

Immediately the stately figure resumed its place in the glass screen, where it quickly dissolved, till nothing remained of it but a dangling, grinning skull.

# A HUNTER'S PARADISE.



# A HUNTER'S PARADISE.

WHILST passing through the lovely scenery of that part of Gloucestershire, beyond the broad and shining Severn, known as the Forest of Dean, I received a visit from a military man, one Major Tripp, who was spending a few weeks with his friends at Newnham, prior to his return to the far East, from whence he had returned a few months previously.

Major Tripp was a fine military-looking man, in the prime of life, that is, on the right side of forty, and gave one the impression of having seen a deal of service in the East, as his bronzed features, and the somewhat "crowsfoot" corners to his eyes, pointed to exposure and endurance; while there was a penetrating look about the eyes themselves, and an angular formation of the eyelids and brows, which made it evident to a physiognomist like myself that he was a self-reliant and vigilant man.

The day was very warm (mid June), and I had halted

for my noontide rest and meal in a very pretty little wooded valley, through which trickled a babbling brook, locally known as the Cannop River. I had chosen the spot because it was secluded, and offered pasture and water for my horse, which I had just unharnessed, when a gentleman sauntered quietly by the brookside, amusing himself with a trout rod. I say amusing himself with the *rod* because his thoughts were evidently not upon *trout*, for he whipped the water in a mechanical manner, his mind evidently being preoccupied with other thoughts than angling.

I wished him "Good day," and inquired what luck he had had.

His reply was that his luck was nil.

"But," said he, "the trout that rises to my 'flipping' must be a fool, indeed; and, apparently, they are so well-schooled, hereabouts, that they discover my lack of skill, and shake their silvery heads, warily, at my clumsy attempt at the art piscatorial."

With his permission, I took the lissom rod, and as we strolled together along the lovely, murmuring stream, gave him a practical lesson in fly-fishing, and in less than an hour landed ten small trout. What more natural than to ask my new friend to visit my caravan, and refresh the inner man?

My invitation was cordially accepted, and Major Tripp, the modern Nimrod—as I afterwards found him to be—entered my domicile, and spent the remaining portion of the long summer's day with me.

Need I say that he did not depart from my humble roof-tree without leaving behind him, quite unknowingly, a very strange story indeed, and one that I have not the least reason to doubt was an absolutely true one.

Probably, some persons who are fond of big game shooting, and consequently of tall stories, may be inclined to cavil and laugh at the Major's story merely out of sheer jealousy, and because the region in which his adventure took place is so far distant as to be well-nigh unapproachable to the ordinary hunter, tantalising him in the same manner as the beautiful grapes did the poor fox in the fable.

"A Hunter's Paradise" will, probably, be visited by ardent and wealthy sportsmen during the next few years, and it is to be hoped that they will use discretion, and not indiscriminately slaughter the animals mentioned by Major Tripp during his *tête-à-tête* with me. As a large sum of money, unflinching nerves, great endurance, and ample time are required by those who follow in Major Tripp's footsteps, it is not at all likely that the wild haunts he has discovered will be invaded by the ordinary "pot-hunter" for many years to come.

## The Story as Told to Me.

I LIKE soldiering very well, but, I must own, there are many things which I like better; and, among them, I have a great fondness for shooting big game. The open-air life, free from pipe-clay and regulations, suits me admirably, and many of my somewhat frequent furloughs, when in India, were spent amid the primæval forests and jungles which lie at the feet of the mighty Himalaya Mountains.

Life was then worth living.

Then came the wretched time when the order arrived for our regiment to proceed to Hong Kong.

The Japs and Chinese were going it, hammer and tongs, or I might put it more correctly—hammer and anvil—for the disorganised Chinamen were outfought at every point, both on sea and land, by the men from Niphon and Yesso.

Hong Kong — a wretched little island, about one-fifth the area of the Isle of Wight—had no charm for me from the beginning of my sojourn, as it contained nothing but soldiers and Chinese washermen; there was not a solitary, pretty, unappropriated lady in the whole island, and in twelve months I came heartily to loathe the place. There was, literally, a lack of sport upon the islet,

and if a military man cannot have decent shooting, what on earth is there for him to fall back upon, but everlasting brandy pawnee and indifferent cigars?

My only solace while I remained in the island was that my dear old comrade, Captain Furze, was with me, and together, we got what fun we could out of the place, but at length got so tired of Hong Kong, that we decided upon selling out of the regiment, and spending a couple of years of enjoyment in travelling about, and having a peep at the Eastern world and its queer inhabitants.

And sell out we did.

Captain Furze, or, as we called him, "Prickles," from the pointedness of his name, was, like myself, an only son, and our parents being wealthy, we had little else to do than please ourselves as to the mode of life we indulged in.

"Prickles," like myself, was exceedingly steady in character, and exceedingly fond of sport, and as we had been in the regiment together for five years, had become like brothers, or twins, as the men called us, and either would have willingly laid down his life to save that of his friend.

At the time of our departure from Hong Kong, the war had terminated, with the unexpected but decisive victory of the Japanese, whose war-ships played havoc with the Chinese Navy, the ships of which were of no more use, in the hands of the jabbering celestials, for

defensive purposes than so many merchant vessels, or, as Furze quaintly put it, so many washing tubs manned by monkeys!

There were, at that time, many English vessels upon the Chinese Station, and upon one of these, the *Centurion*, we were allowed a passage to Japan—thanks to the kindness of the Commodore, who was present at our farewell dinner.

The *Centurion* was bound for a cruise around Niphon, as the largest island of the Japanese Archipelago is named, and we were, in due time, landed at Yokohama, the commercial capital of the country.

We spent a month together seeing whatever we could that was strange to us, and enjoying ourselves as roving Englishmen of means are wont to do. We made a number of friends; among them a native gentleman, who lived in the Northern Isle—Yesso—who took quite a liking to us and our lively manners; so much so that he invited us to spend a week or two at his estate near Hakodadi, where he promised us some shooting.

Having nothing better to do, we accompanied him, in a curiously contrived vessel, which, for want of a better name, I will call his yacht, and which, like the mechanism of the human frame, was wonderfully and fearfully made. After being out a week the weather became so boisterous, that we entertained grave fears of ever compassing the seven hundred miles of wild water which lies between Yokohama and Hakodadi.

However, "All's well that ends well;" and at the end of the third week we cast anchor in our port of disembarkation, which is one of the strangest in the universe. I need not tell you with what joy we hailed mother earth again. To feel we had something more firm than a top-heavy sailing junk beneath our feet gave us a pleasant sensation, and to do our good friend justice, I must say that he did his utmost to promote our pleasure, as he organised shooting and fishing parties, native theatricals, kite-flying matches, and everything else he could devise for our amusement and enjoyment.

The fishing and shooting both yielded splendid sport; as deer, boars, hares, and foxes were plentiful, and we had quite sufficient upon our hands during the two months we stayed at the house of old Kasama.

Foxes suggest hunting in England, but not in Yesso; for there they are so numerous and destructive that the natives, who hold them in great abhorrence—regarding them as animated by demons—shoot, trap, or destroy them by every means at their command; our services were, therefore, in great request by the local gentry, whose estates were infested with this voracious pest.

The birds and wildfowl are very numerous both in variety of individual species and collective number; but let them pass; I want to tell you of the biggest game you ever heard of.

It so happened, that during our stay, a small trading steamer put in at Hakodadi to take in cargo, the captain of

which was promptly invited by our friend Kasama to dine with us.

He was bound for Okotsk, the most eastern port of Russian Siberia, to which he invited us to take passage on his vessel. Bears, deer, and other animals, he informed us, were plentiful in the Stanovoi Mountains, which, commencing in Mongolia, run a course of three thousand miles, and end at Behring's Straits.

Loving adventure in totally new ground, we gladly accompanied him, and in ten days landed in the dirty and distant town of Okotsk.

We soon made the acquaintance of the chief men of the place, and, naturally, among others, were introduced to the Governor. At first, surly and suspicious, as befitted his office, he was somewhat disinclined to favour our friendly advances; but the application of some Irish whiskey, a great change from the everlasting vodki, and a few presents, which we obtained from the captain who had so kindly brought us from Yesso, put us on quite a different footing, and the great man soon became very partial and friendly to us.

After a few days, we broached to him the purpose for which we had visited such a distant region—to hunt and shoot big game; and he so far fell in with our ideas, that he not only gave us permission to visit the Stanovoi Mountains, but to roam whither we wished in the interior, and even went so far as to provide us with a guide, certainly a very unreliable one, but still it

showed the Governor's good intention, he gave us the best he had.

One fine morning, "Prickles" and I set off, accompanied by four natives—one to cook, two to carry, and the other to act as hunter and guide. We formed quite a respectable cavalcade as we filed off with our twelve sturdy little mountain ponies.

The nearest spur of the mountains is quite one hundred and fifty miles from the coast, but our sturdy ponies were well up to their work, and we travelled over rocky plains, through tangled woods and picturesque gorges, shooting both feather and fur as we advanced. Some of the birds we could not name, as they appear to have no counterpart in Europe, but many of them were very familiar to us both.

The mountains were eventually reached, and when we shot our first bear, we held quite a feast and festival in a snug mountain gorge, and drank "to our friends twenty thousand miles away."

It was hardly such toddy as we get in England, for we only flavoured the sparkling water from the torrent with a dash of brandy; but the keen mountain air gave our naturally high spirits such a fillip, that the weak drink was as nectar to us.

Well, bears and deer fell to our rifles every day, and we were rapidly getting together quite a pile of fine skins and horns as trophies, when, one day, a strange, wild-looking creature, dressed in furs, appeared in our

camp. No one knew from whence he came, but there he stood, and as he evinced no fear or intention of departing, we showed him what little hospitality we could. He remained with us, guiding us to likely places for obtaining a shot at the large bears which roam the fastnesses of these awful mountains.

Our new friend was a little, flat-faced being, with yellowish leathery-looking skin, long, black, straight hair, and black beady eyes; he was dressed in a fur coat, a short petticoat of the same warm material, and wore boots of hide. His head covering was a leathern hood, and his weapons a bow, arrows, and knife.

In a few days, we learnt to converse, by signs, with this strange being, and "Prickles" and I quite enjoyed the strange pantomime, or, as he called it, "conversational gymnastics"; but, for some reason, our four followers would have nothing to do with our new acquaintance, whom they looked upon as possessing some kind of occult influence over us, which by-and-by would be exercised to our detriment or destruction.

They called him a "*gin*," or evil spirit (gin, singularly enough, frequently means the same in English), and told us that he would one day expand to a gigantic size, and strangle us as easily as we could wring the neck of a wildfowl.

Of course, we took no notice of the men and their ignorant tomfoolery, but busied ourselves in thinking of a name for the skin-clad native, and, at length, decided

to christen him "Toast," his furs suggesting warmth, and by that name he was in future called.

By signs, "Toast" gave us to understand that a few weeks' journey north, animals were to be found which quite dwarfed the largest bear or deer we had shot. If we cared to accompany him, he would guide us to their lair.

We put it to our Okotsk followers, but they averred they would not cross the mountains, with such a guide as "Toast," for anything we could give them. We might go blindly to our death if we chose, but they would return home in safety.

We expostulated with them, but to no purpose; they declared we were both bewitched by the little mannikin, and should find, to our cost, that it would not do to play with such evil spirits in the form of a man.

"Look at him," said the spokesman, "did ever anyone see such a fiendish head on human shoulders?

"See his mis-shapen body; it is a sign of his mis-shapen mind; he will kill you, in spite of your guns; we will, therefore, turn back, and not go with you, for you go to certain destruction."

"Prickles" and I took council together, and after well weighing the matter in all lights, decided to trust the stranger, and see what adventure would befall us for our temerity in doing so.

"Toast" was called in, and, by signs, informed of our decision to follow him to the hunting ground of which he

had spoken, and he was also given to understand that upon the least sign of any suspicious movement on his part, a bullet would be sent clean through him.

The poor fellow was civil enough, and at first was evidently afraid of our weapons, which he durst not approach even when unloaded, and when we were about to fire at any object, invariably placed his fingers in his ears, and closed his eyes.

After vainly expostulating and arguing with our camp servants to accompany us, we decided to allow them to return peaceably to their homes; first selecting what provisions, cooking apparatus, and camping-out impedimenta we required. These things we packed upon the backs of three of the stoutest ponies, retained three others for riding purposes, and gave the remaining goods and the other ponies to the four chicken-hearted Okotski, who lost no time in packing up and setting off down the mountain side upon their return journey.

We sat down and watched them growing less in size and more indistinct at each turn they took on their tortuous and difficult way.

At length, they were lost to view, and as they disappeared to the south-east, so we journeyed onward in a precisely opposite direction—due north-west.

For many days we followed our guide, halting each day for three or four hours, to stalk some of the big game with which the whole district abounds; indeed, so numerous was the head of game which we met, both fur

and feather, that it might truly be called a hunter's paradise.

We discovered, and shot, several distinct species of deer, two kinds of bear, wild sheep and oxen; among the latter being the musk-ox and yak. Then there were the wolf, lynx, and wild hog; to say nothing of the smaller animals, the black fox, marten, sable, ermine, and others.

Among the most toothsome of the wildfowl were geese, swan, and wild duck—the latter, on some of the lakes, being in tremendous flocks.

With such a long list before him, what could a sportsman desire more?

Our guns had the left-hand barrel rifled, the right being for shot; and it was no uncommon thing for one of us, in successive shots, to bring down a lordly elk with one barrel, and a dainty duck or goose with the other.

"Toast" proved a capital fisherman, and could always lure us fish from the numerous lakes or rivers, from which we were never more than a mile or two distant, and by which we generally contrived to pitch our night camp. His lines and hooks were of the most primitive kind, the former being of sinew, grass, or hair, and the latter of ivory or bone.

Many of the fish are peculiar to the country, having no counterpart in European waters; one among them being called the thymallus, which attains a great size—one of them being enough for a meal for several men. Another, called the nalim, is a kind of burbot, and makes a fine dish,

the average size of these fish being about four or five pounds.

Many of the fish we were quite familiar with in our own country; pike, perch, carp, grayling, and trout abounding. Sturgeon and sterlet were also caught, cooked, and enjoyed with a hunter's appetite.

Some of our journey lay through dark and dense pine woods, and in them, by the uncertain light, the diminutive figure of our guide appeared more like an elf than a human being. He chattered, and gesticulated, as if we understood every word of his jargon, and showed us feats of archery, with his odd-shaped little bow, which would have done credit to Robin Hood himself. Several times he transfixed a running hare with an arrow, and brought it down as smartly as we could have stopped it with a bullet; a feat, by the way, which is not particularly easy of accomplishment, even to a good shot.

About the end of the fourth week we reached the foot of some pine-clad hills, and as we laboriously ascended the steep acclivity, our guide became more and more excited, and his little beady, black eyes seemed bursting from their sockets with the excitement which he did not attempt to control. We were getting close to our "Happy Hunting Ground," and in due time caught the excitement from "Toast."

He made grotesque gesticulations, expressing the gigantic size of the animals we were about to encounter, and patted our gun stocks to indicate that we must be quite ready,

while, to give more force to his idea of the difficulty of killing the big game, he pointed to the top band of our rifles as the point to which we were to load them, evidently imagining that we supplied our weapons with ammunition in the same way as the good wife fills her sausage skins —by cramming the stuffing in from the breach.

We camped that night on the brow of the hill, surrounded by a panorama of magnificent scenery, and after an early breakfast in the morning, picketed our ponies, and scrambled forward on foot.

As the morning mists rolled away, leaving the valley much as the disc of the magic-lantern leaves a picture on the screen before an audience, so the landscape before us gradually unfolded itself, until a range of mountains appeared on the opposite side of the valley, over which we had a most charming birds'-eye view.

Completely shut in on every side, with great wood-clad hills from a few hundred to a couple of thousand feet high, the valley appeared, like some place of great enchantment; indeed, it *was* a place of enchantment, for the foot of an European had never before trodden this part of the earth.

It was, approximately, from twenty to twenty-five miles long, and from four to six miles broad. Tiny rivers, like threads of silver, ran down the hill sides, and formed tranquil lakes in the well wooded vale, and everything in and around us was as primæval as if the foot of man had never trodden its mazy intricacies. No white man had

ever gazed upon the scene, and, doubtless, few natives had ever put foot into its unexplored wildernesses, for the valley was supposed to be the home of evil spirits, and shunned by the handful of natives who inhabit those distant regions.

"Toast" gazed with awe down the deep hill sides, but neither threats nor the offer of presents would prevail upon him to go with us into the valley. It was to him a region of evil enchantment, it was taboo.

Suddenly, he pointed wildly to some moving object, which was crossing a grassy plain, about half-way across the valley. It looked very much like a brown bear, and we immediately determined to follow the animal, and, if possible, get a shot at him.

We found our progress barred at such frequent intervals by the dense undergrowth of shrubs, that we almost despaired of reaching the more level ground of the valley, before our quarry had disappeared.

Trees, both growing and dead, lay in our path, and frequently the spaces between the former were so tangled by a perfect network of a peculiar creeping plant, somewhat like the ivy, but loving to grow and catch hold of any object in a horizontal position instead of climbing like the ivy, that we had to cut our way through with our hunting knives, a proceeding which we found to be very exhausting, as we were in such a hurry that we scarcely gave ourselves breathing time.

At one place, we came to a deep and broad rift in the

mountain side, and sat down, nonplussed, at such a formidable impediment to our downward course. It was forty or fifty feet wide and perhaps thirty feet deep, and gave us the impression that a crack in the mountain had gradually widened and caused a landslip on the opposite side, which was only a few feet above the normal level of the surrounding ground.

"Prickles" soon found a way out of our difficulty by cutting some long trailers from our erstwhile foe, the creeper, which now proved our friend by acting as a rope down which we swarmed, as if we were escaping for our lives from some formidable castle.

On reaching the foot of the mountain, to our joy we again saw the animal of which we were in quest, but as we were now on a level with it, it appeared as far away as ever. We supposed it to be a very large brown bear, apparently engaged in carrying some boughs or similar objects to its lair, and eagerly pressed forward to obtain a shot at it.

When within half a mile of the huge beast it quietly disappeared round a pinnacle of rock, upon which we kept our eyes as we rapidly advanced.

When within a couple of hundred yards of the rocky barrier which lay between ourselves and our unsuspecting victim, we paused to recover breath, and to see that everything appertaining to our weapons was in perfect order, for a large bear is one of the most ferocious animals to tackle under the sun, especially when he is only wounded.

Quite right: we therefore advanced quietly to the rock, and I, being first, motioned to Furze to keep quiet, while I peeped round the side to see what had become of our quarry.

I shall never forget my horror at what I saw, for at the moment I felt quite unnerved, my rifle slipping from my grasp and falling upon the soft grass at my feet.

Noiselessly moving directly towards me, at a distance of only a few paces, was the largest animal I had ever beheld; an elephant would be a fool to it! I should say the gigantic creature stood at least eighteen feet high, and had a long, shaggy mane like a lion, while the remainder of its body was covered with a dense mass of long, reddish-brown hair. Its tusks—for they were what the animal was really carrying when we mistook it for a large bear carrying branches to its lair—were so curved that they formed a spiral nearly completing a circle. In fact, to make the matter short, it was neither more nor less than a *mammoth*, which is supposed to have been extinct for several thousand years.

Here was "Toast's" big game! We had found it with a vengeance! !

Strange to relate, the mammoth, after halting to gaze upon us as we shrank back against the rock, quietly proceeded leisurely on its way, whilst we, recovering from our surprise, at once followed it.

Captain Furze approached on one side, and I on the other, each firing into its huge carcase at the

point where the fore leg joins the body, where the skin is more pliable and less thick than on other parts of the body. Our hope was to reach its heart; but we did not succeed, for the huge beast, bellowing and trumpeting with rage, turned suddenly upon us with uplifted trunk and bristling mane.

His unearthly appearance and his charge were both terrific!

I thought my end had come, that I had met my "Kismet," as I mechanically, but quickly, slipped another cartridge into my rifle, and as the animal paused a second as if in doubt which of us to make for, I knelt and fired as one who draws a bow at a venture, at the wicked-looking eye turned upon me.

Then came a terrible crash and a thousand stars, and I knew no more till "Prickles'" voice, close to my ear, inquired:

"You are not hurt, old chap, are you? See here, we've bagged such an animal as the eye of living man has never looked upon. Can you rise? Try."

I sat up, like one in a dream, wondering for the moment where I was, and what dear old Furze meant.

Then I opened my eyes, and looking upon the ground before me saw the mighty monster I had killed; the sight immediately recalling my scattered senses.

I felt all over my anatomy to ascertain if any bones were broken, a proceeding which caused "Prickles" to roar with laughter.

"Feel your head, old fellow," said he, "that's where you were struck by this overhanging branch."

I did feel and shake my head, and found it was still intact and safe upon my body, although my fall had made me feel very groggy.

What had happened was this.

When I fired, the animal was pierced through the brain and instantly killed, but his headlong rush carried him forward nearly to the trunk of the tree under which I knelt, and in his fall one of his great tusks caught a branch and snapped it off so that it fell upon my head, which was fortunately protected by a pith helmet, causing the heavy limb to glance off, or my skull would inevitably have been crushed in.

I soon recovered, and we then took a critical survey of our fallen foe. There was only one word to describe him —*enormous*—and every part of the huge quadruped might be described by the same word, except the eyes, and they were disproportionately small, being only about double the size of the human optic; but even with one of that size he could probably see all he wished to.

"What shall we do with his two beautiful ivory tusks?" I exclaimed, with admiration.

"Let us cut them off," said my comrade.

We accordingly set about our task, using our hunting-knives, but we might just as well have tried to cut Cleopatra's Needle in two with such puny weapons.

We worked upon the base of one tusk during the

remainder of the day, but only succeeded in notching our knives till they so far resembled saws that we used them as such, but toil as we might dusk found us foiled in our attempt to despoil the fallen monarch of his ivory.

How we blessed "Toast," who was a good three miles away with our camp-kit and provisions, but there was nothing for it but to abandon our task for the day, and return up the mountain side before it became too dark to find the way.

It took us quite three hours to regain our Mongol guide, and so exhausted were we with our climb, that on reaching camp we could scarcely stand.

Luckily, "Toast" had everything prepared for our return, and a pannikin of tea, fried bear steaks, and biscuits, pulled us together wonderfully, and soothed our tired frames.

We sat conversing far into the night, smoking our pipes beneath the starry dome of heaven, and at last turned our feet to the fire, pulled our rugs around us, and slept as only tired hunters can sleep—deep, healthful, solid sleep.

Next morning, like giants refreshed, we were up betimes, and taking two of the ponies, scrambled down into the valley by a rugged and circuitous path, but it was quite ten o'clock in the forenoon before we reached our dead mammoth.

There lay our leviathan, with his ears completely eaten away in the night by wolves, and we shook our heads,

solemnly, when we surveyed our futile efforts of the previous day.

"There is our quarry," said Prickles, "but how in the name of patience are we going to get those tusks off, Tripp?"

"Quarry, quarry! why, Furze, old fellow, that word solves the difficulty," said I, struck with a happy thought. "Why, blow them off, to be sure. Make a mine at the base of each and blast them off!"

Easier said than done.

Cartridge after cartridge was exploded, and our hunting knives brought into play, and little by little the huge tusks were gradually detached from the cranium, so that at about 3 p.m. we had the satisfaction of separating them entirely. Hurrah, the ivory was ours!

We rigged a kind of bridge of poles on the backs of the ponies, so that they looked like a pair of Siamese twins, and upon this masterpiece of branches and trailing vines, proceeded to place the tusks.

We heaved and puffed, panted and perspired, and at last, after many unsuccessful attempts, placed one curly tusk upon the backs of our two patient ponies, but that was all; one was a load for them both, as it weighed at least three hundred pounds.

The other massive tusk we left regretfully behind, as we had no means of carrying it, although it represented at least £300.

At 5 p.m. we struck along the valley to find an

easier ascent to our camp, and were delighted to see three distinct herds of mammoths at different periods of our journey, while in many places, huge tusks were strewn upon the ground, just where the mighty beasts had died. Some were still attached to the skulls, others were lying in solitariness, the softer bone of the huge skeletons having long since decayed and disappeared. Probably, some of the tusks had lain in the valley for centuries, and may have been coeval with the biblical patriarchs or even with Adam himself.

We reached camp at dusk, and after a hearty meal, talked over our future plans, and before falling off to sleep, decided to return to Okotsk the very next day, as the cold weather would soon be setting in, and it would mean death to be caught in a snowstorm in this high region.

"Toast" came with us as far as the old shooting camp, from whence our camp followers had gone home alone, and there we gave him whatever we did not need for our own use.

He was delighted with the dirty saucepans and a kettle which we gave him, and so numerous were the articles we discarded and presented to him, when he left us one morning on his tramp northward to his home amid the wilderness of Mongolia, that he had as much baggage as he could carry.

The last we saw of him was as he turned a pinnacle of rock, around which the pathway trended. He looked

like a perambulating tinman's shop, and his ample mouth stretched from ear to ear with delight as he swung round to give us a parting smile of unalloyed joy. Our presents would make him a nobleman in his own tribe; he was a millionaire in old iron.

We reached Okotsk, and had a packing-case made by a native carpenter for our mighty tusk, as we had no wish for it to be seen and questions asked about it.

We waited a month for the steamer to Japan, and from thence arrived in England last March, per s.s. *Perthshire*, our treasure of ivory being safely landed at the docks.

£100,000 worth of ivory lies in that distant Siberian valley, and in a month's time I purpose setting out to bring it home!

I wish to take three gentlemen hunters out with me, and have already secured two well-known sportsmen. Where can I find a third?

# MEETIN' HOUSE HILL.



"He Was as Dead as a Herrin'."

*Meetin' House Hill.*

# MEETIN' HOUSE HILL.

NORFOLK has proved its claim to be considered one of the principal counties for the rearing both of centenarians and game. In travelling through this county, which knows no peer as a sporting district, I chanced to roam as far as the scattered, inconsiderable village of Barton Turf, in East Norfolk, the village giving a name to the large Broad which lies in the parish.

I was attracted by the sparkling waters of the large lagoon, which, being completely surrounded by reed beds, has a comfortable, cosy appearance.

The sun was setting as I entered the village, throwing a roseate hue over the liquid expanse, which showed no human life upon its surface, if I except a solitary individual who sat in a flat-bottomed reed boat, which he propelled with slow and deliberate strokes towards the staithe or landing-place, at which I had come to a halt for the night.

Slowly but surely, the boat neared the staithe, and I sat down on the steps of my van to contemplate the quiet beauty of my surroundings.

Reeds grew to right and left of me, and reeds on the further side of the Broad bounded the horizon, except for a few stunted willow trees, which stood out boldly in the clear atmosphere, silhouetted by the rosy western sky.

I could see the square tower of Irstead Church standing like a solitary watchman by the side of the slow-flowing River Ant. One face of its hoary tower caught the rays of the setting sun, which gave a blush to its ancient masonry—stone-work which had seen the sunshine and wintry blasts of many generations before the voice of William of Wykeham, the architect Bishop, had been heard in its resonant nave during the fifteenth century.

Behind me were the woods of Sir Jacob Preston, reaching nearly to the water's edge, and above the lofty trees peeped the distant tower of Barton Church, which has two ancient honours — that of containing the oldest "brass" inscribed in the English language, and the finest painted chancel screen in the county.

I could distinguish many sounds which strangely emphasised the prevailing stillness of my surroundings.

I heard the distant baying of a dog, the evening song of the lark, and the sharp "twit-twit" of the skimming swallows, as they laced about in an intricate kind of flying dance above the placid water.

Then came the loud drone of a flying beetle, as it wheeled its uncertain flight, but no human voice sounded on the still air. A perfect calm prevailed, doubling every object that was contiguous to the mirror-like water.

As I mused on these things, the boat came so near to where I sat, that I perceived it was rowed by an old man, whose grizzled locks hung profusely from beneath his shapeless hat, and reached nearly to his shoulders.

Presently his frail bark, drawing but three or four inches of water, ran high upon the gravelly shore, and the old man stepped stiffly out, giving himself a stretch and me a "Good evenin', mäster!" as he did so.

A chat naturally followed, and I found the old fellow very communicative upon things appertaining to the water, which he said he had "followed" (lived by) during his whole life.

By his somewhat stiff gait and slowness of stooping, and by the manner of his habitual grunting at any little exertion, I could tell the man was very old, and my curiosity prompted me to ask him his age.

I guessed him to be seventy-five, but was scarcely prepared for his answer.

"Seventy-five? What, me on'y saventy-five? Why, my boy Bob's mor'n that! He'll be saventy-six come Old Michaelmas Day. Poor faller, he's got rumatiz so bad and fare so helpless that I've bin over to Howe Mill to dig up his bit o' garden for him. Saventy-five! Why, mäster,

I'm tarned a hunderd! Yes, sure as my name's Gibbs I cut my hunderd scotch last barthday."

Here was a subject for me. I had never hypnotised a centenarian, and felt eager to hear what kind of tale such an ancient mariner could spin. I invited him to stay a little time with me and take some supper, but he excused himself. However, after a little more conversation, finding I loved the water as much as himself, he promised to give up the morrow to me, and bring his big boat and take me for a sail.

He was as good as his word, and came at the appointed time, his youngest son (a lad of sixty-nine) helping us off with the boat.

When we were afloat, I remarked that his youngest son did not appear very strong, to which the old fellow replied:

"No, and he ain't; he always was sickly, and I've had a deal o' trouble to rear him! And arter all he 'on't make old bones, I'm afraid."

After a long day spent in sailing on the Ant and Bure, we returned at 6 p.m., and after a hearty meal old Master Gibbs related the following story of his early days, though he probably never knew that he had divulged a secret that had lain buried in his breast since the early part of the century. Poor old man, he is now dead and gone, and the recital of the following curious circumstances in his early life can do him no harm.

## The Story as Told to Me.

I HA' bin used to the water all my life, for I'm a wherry-man, like my father and my grandfather wor afore me.

I was born on a wherry, ha' lived all my blessed life on a wherry, and very likely shall peg out on one when my time come, and surely that ain't fur away, seein' that I'm a goodish bit past the 'lotted time o' man, who's supposed to ha' had enough on't at t'ree-score year and ten.

When I was five-and-twenty, and as sprightly a young blade as yew'd find in a long day's march, I took myself a wife—a wherryman's daughter; none of your wasp-waisted town mawthers, but a reg'lar stuggy, hard-workin' gal, with a arm like a blacksmith and a fist like a shoulder o' mutton; one that could pull on a sheet, and take her tarn at the helm like a man, and a good 'un at that.

I 'on't say I'd ha' spliced jest then, but I had a Uncle Ben die jest afore and leave me £100, and as my father give me another £50, I managed to scratch and rake about till I had nearly enough to buy a wherry. She was bran new, and as smart a craft as ever crossed a broad, was the *Robert and Mary*, as we christened her, 'cause they were our names, my wife and me, and our wherry was our pet.

I had a cottage at a place called Meetin' House Hill, at Worstead, that jist suited my trade, because it was as nigh as could be mid-way betwixt Worstead and North Walsham.

Coming up the Ant from Yarmouth way, when you git to Honing there's a cut, or deek, as we call it, running up to Meetin' House Hill; it's only about 600 yards long, and up. that there deek was my cottage and staithe (landing place).

In them days the deek was plenty big enough to float a deep-laden wherry, 'cause we kep' it well dydled out, but now it's a'most choked up wi' weeds and muck. Still, thet's naythe here nor there. Bathsheba, my sister, took charge of the cottage, and looked arter things when we were afloat, and a werry good gall she was, too, though a bit young.

Business fared to prosper with us, and in twelve months I had paid every farden I owed for the wherry, and had got clear all round, when one day I fell in with some chaps at Horsey who did a bit in the Dutch line. They brought spirits and other stuff from Holland when fishin' was bad, and wanted someone to take it on to Worstead and North Walsham, the only big towns for a dozen miles round, though p'raps Yarmouth was nigher; still, there was more risk there, and they could get rid o' all they could land where I say.

There lay my house within tew mile o' each of the towns—a fair tew mile to North Walsham, but a short

tew to Worstead. I was just their man, and without more ado I jined 'em, and tarned Dutchman.

The game was for the Horsey boys to run over in their fishin' lugger to the Dutch coast, and get back as sharp as they could, and when the wind and wather was right, plump their cargo ashore in the dark by the Warren, if all was clear; if not they hove it overboard and anchored it in a sartin place, so that some more of the boys would find it kinder accidental, when they went to draw their crab pots. Course it was all planned, and everything worked right nicely. This was all wery well in right fine wather, but in nästy, rorky, lashy wather, no carger runnin' could be done.

When the stuff was ashore, there was no trouble to carry it over the Marrum banks to the marsh behind, and it was easy enough to borry a few hosses in them days, 'cause a keg of Hollands left in the manger was sure to put matters right, whether the squire was a justice o' the peace or no. Justices have mouths like other folks and know the walue of a drop o' good spirits, especially when it come cheap like, and get brought to their own doors without any trouble.

Sixty, eighty, and even a hundred kegs I've taken at a time into my wherry, and covered 'em up with corn, coal, or bricks, or whatever happened to be my cargo.

From the shore to the nighest part of Horsey Mere is only a matter of less 'n a mile, so a couple of hosses and half a dozen men could soon get the stuff aboard.

I made as much in one trip as I might now in ten. Them wor what you might call the "good old times." A man always rode over to Worstead and Walsham, when I had any what we tarmed "cross" aboard, and gave sartin persons notice, so they could come and take it away the follerin' night.

By road from Horsey to Walsham is only about fourteen mile, but its a werry roundabout way by water, and to my house was hard on twenty-five mile, so when the wind was agin' me I had to do a tidy bit o' quanting to shove her there by the follerin' night.

Lawk a mussey me! it was rare work.

Quite a twelvemonth of this game went on without a single hitch, and then suthin' occurred that skeer't me a tidy bit.

Bathsheba, my young sister, was a rare nice-lookin' mawther, and was allus bright and cheerful, tuning away from mornin' till night — very different to me, 'cause although I'm light-hearted 'nough, I never had no more woice for singin' then a blaring dickey (donkey).

As she was a fine strapping wench, of course, the young chaps would come a-hangin' about, which arter all was on'y natural they should.

One on 'em, Sam Haylock, seemed to suit her fancy best, and he was always a-hangin' round, spooney like, and I told 'Sheba she'd better tell him to be off, fearing as how he might discover our little game.

He was a fine young faller, six foot or more, I should

say, but there was suthin' about him I didn't sorter keer for, suthin' under his eyebrows like; he didn't seem to look at you when he talked. There was a kinder hang-dog look about him I couldn't stummik, and I told him he'd better keep away a bit, the mawther was young, and there was plenty o' time for him to come courtin' when she was tarned twenty.

Of course he kicked up rough a bit, but he took my brotherly advice, and we didn't see so much of him, which sartingly relieved my mind, for smuggling in them days meant six foot o' rope for the throttle and nothing for yer feet.

Well, one April mornin', we were getting out our "cross"—between two and three o'clock, I think it was, but anyhow, it was tidily dark—when one of our hands, Jason, said he saw a man standing up to his knees in the water, amun the reed, watching us.

I dropped my keg, and away I go to the spot, but there worn't no man there, so I thought Jason must ha' been mistook; howsomever, thinks I, I'll watch a bit when we run the next cargo, and so I did.

For a week or two nothing came over on the "cross," but bime-by I got a nice lot o' silk, some 'bacca, and about forty kegs of the right sort—French brandy, and when the wherry was safely moored by my staithe, and the stuff was bein' brought out of the hold and put inter carts, I took my old flint-lock out of the cabin, and had a look round among the reed and boulders that lined the water

on both sides; for at the end of the deek I'd made quite a big space, so as to tarn the wherry when I wanted, and beside, the marsh was very low and made good reed-ground, some on it growing ten foot high.

Well, I took the long-barrel'd old flint-lock, which was deep-loden for an old hare, for they take a rare dose o' lead to stop 'em, and had a look round, swaring to the boys that if I found anyone watching us he should have the whole ounce of lead, for I reckon there was two pipe bowls of shot in that charge; I hadn't far to go afore I see a dark objec' squattin' in a reed rond.

"Blame me!" thinks I, "that's Sam Haylock a spyin'," tho' why I put it down as him I can't ezactly tell, on'y, you see, I'd got him in my mind.

Anyway, I hollered out:

"You sneaking begger, I see you, and now to h—— with you!"

I pulled the trigger, but somehow the old fule of a gun didn't speak, she only give a puff in the pan and a click, but held her charge.

Then I heard a scream, and a splashing, and dullor in the rond, and out jumped—not Sam, but sister 'Sheba shriekin' like a wounded hare.

Lor, I shook and duddered like a ozier in a breeze o' wind. It was a mortal marcy the gun didn't go off, or I should have had 'Sheba's blood on my hands, and wearing dannocks (gloves) won't hide murder!

I'd ha' shot Sam if I'd caught *him* spyin' and ha'

thought no more on't than knocking over an old fulfer (fieldfare), but I had to have several deep gulps of brandy afore I got over the fright of nearly peppering my own sister.

Of course, I had to have a explanation, and 'Sheba, she say:

"Why, Bob, didn't you know a woman's curiosity afore? I thought there was suthin' in the wind, because whenever you come home late at night there's always two or three carts come down to the staithe in the 'arly morning. I knew there was suthin' mysterious like, so thinks I, I'll watch; so I put yar old coat on, and had seen all I wanted, when away come you with that old gun, and nearly frited the wery life out o' me."

Then it came out that she and Sam had knocked their heads together, and had made up their minds that I was at no good, being about so much in the night time, and they watched me, and, as I say, 'Sheba nearly lost her life; but instead of har losing har life, blow me if she didn't get another life tacked on to hers, for she and Sam got the right side of me, and they very soon had the sibbets put up at charch, and 'Sheba was made Mrs. Haylock.

Sam tarned out a hard-working lad, but he was wery quarrelsome and masterful, he wanted to be skipper and head serang, and to lay his paw on to more than was his share, but as I was owner of the wherry, I put my foot down on his back a bit now and agen.

All the summer we worked together, and nearly every week had a fair amount of "cross" to carry to Meetin' House Hill, but there was a summat about Sam that I couldn't onderstand: I always felt suspicious of him, and oncomfortable like.

I don't know that he really would ha' done me a mischief, but I think he would ha' bin pleased to ha' trodden the deck o' the *Robert and Mary*, and have called her his own. Cän't say.

One dark night in the following winter, coming through Candle Deek into the Thurne, I got blowed overboard, and, as there is seven or eight foot of water there, I'd ha' like to ha' bin drownded, as I can't swim; and I remember it was a wery long time before he shortened sail and came back in the dinghy to look for me, and I also mind that he didn't look over pleased when he did see me ahanging onter the quant. I looked the wrong colour for him, he wanted white, but I was red, and I giv' him a bit o' my mind into the bargain.

It was a marcy I worn't drownded, for I can't swim a stroke, but when I fell overboard, down I went, but sune kem up agin, and bobbed my head right onter the long quant, and seized hold on't pretty sharp tu, and there I held on till the wind drifted me ashore, or rather, to a reed rond, where I could stand up in tew foot of water and tew of mud, and sing out for my mate, who as I say was wery slow to pick me up.

Well, arter that affair, Sam and I got altogether wrong,

we wor allus at sixes and sevens, and although we sailed together, we wor never what you might call "hail-fallers-well-met," we jangled too much for that.

Still, Sam did his work, and I done mine, and so things moved along somehow, till one day in the spring a letter was left at the cottage for me. It was what they call a 'nonymus letter. I op'ned it, and took a long while to puzzle it out, being only a poor scholard, for I on'y went to schule till I wor ten, and that's nothin' of a age for gettin' any larnin', 'cept about tops and marbles.

I made it out to say, the revenue men were on my track, and that I should be stopped that wery night at Wayfer Bridge.

I set down in the little inn at Horsey, and ruminated, like the cows du when they chew the cud, on'y I was kinder chewin' my feelin's, for I put this little game down to Sam.

Sam had not come this trip with me, he said he felt outer sorts, so I had brought Jason.

"Hallo!" thinks I, "my fine man, yow've put the ravenue on me, have yer? Yow're on for a bit of revenge, are yer? Half to the informer is it? See you don't get mor'n yow bargain for."

And then I swore a solemn oath to myself, that if he *had* played me false, I'd be level with him, if I swung for't. *And I meant it tu.*

The lugger lay in the offing about a couple of miles from the shore, as if she was fishin', but soon arter dark

she stood in, and by midnight I had fifty-eight kegs aboard the *Robert and Mary*, and taking advantage of the S.W. breeze swung across the Mere, and was down the Old Meadow Deek in less'n a jiffey.

Down Candle Deek we had the wind agin' us, but in the Thurne we made fair away, till we come to Thurne Mouth, where we had a starn wind, which shoved us along with the sheet free, at a great rate.

Then into the Ant we turned, where there is never a fair wind all the way, 'cause the river's like a snake, all mander of ways at once.

It was a dark night—but smugglers love the dark because eyes can't see in the dark, and what eyes can't see the heart don't grieve arter.

When we got onter Barton Broad, I say to Jason, "Mate, we're in for a rumpus to-night, we shall hev the ravenue men aboard when we get to Wayfer Bridge, so I'm goin' to try and trick 'em, 'cause we ain't strong enough to show fight, besides I don't believe in fightin', if a job can be got over without it. We might ha' brought half a dozen boys from the lugger, but I kept squat, and didn't ope' my mouth to 'em about what I know'd was to take place."

"Now, Jason, bring her to in the channel," I say, for we were half-way across Barton Broad, where the water is deepest, "and we'll see if we can't put some fish into the water that we can catch another day."

We hove the *Bob and May* to, and roping the kegs

together through the little eyelet on each cask, quietly paid them over the starn, weighting the rope here and there with sundry pieces of iron we carried a-purpose, and havin' sunk 'em and taken bearings, we hauled to the wind, and purceeded on our way. Once over the Broad the channel narrers, and after a mile the river branches off, the channel to the right leadin' to Sutton and Stalham staithes, and that to the left to North Walsham.

Our course was to the left, and arter goin' half a mile or so, we could jest make out Wayfer Bridge.

At all bridges, and thank goodness they are on'y a few, we have to take in sail and down with the mast, and that was why Wayfer Bridge was the likeliest place for anyone to board us, 'cause the river narrers so that a man can step aboard.

"Now, Jason," I say, "steady's the word; we know nothin', we've seen nothin', and we've heard less, see?"

"Right you are, mäster," he say, "and nothin' they'll get outer me."

I felt rather 'cited when we kem to the bridge, but in the dark we couldn't see a soul, and we slipped through the arch alright, and as we didn't see nobody, we began to take heart o' grace and breathe free agin.

But wait a bit!

We just moved slowly through the water, and were heavin' up the heavy mast with the windlass, when all of a sudden lump come half a dozen men on the deck!

They had sprung out of a ozier clump, and gave us quite a scare, though we were in a manner prepared for 'em. It was a revenue officer and his men, sure enough, and he thought he'd got a nice quiet capture, and ordered us to avast heavin'.

"Now," says he, "my man, I think I've caught you red-handed at it this time. What have you got aboard?"

"I've nothin' on'y fifty coombe of barley, and forty load o' mangel," I say, looking as innercent as a week-old chick.

"That yarn on't du for me," he say, "we must sarch yar hold."

"Sarch and be hanged to ye, yow on't find nothin' aboard on'y what you oughter," I say, bridlin' up, and makin' as if I was riled at bein' thought a smuggler.

"All right," says Mr. Revenue Officer, "so much the better for yew. Moor here by the bank till daylight, and then we'll see what your cargo's made on."

Some of the men sat down on the hatches, and one or two went into the cabin, and as I stood in the well, jest by the cabin door, I kinder hove my eye about to see if I could see anyone movin' about on the banks, who might spread our adwenture about, and as I looked along the banks, my eyes lit on a clump of alder and rushes growin' close down by the water.

The alder bushes hung right over the river so thet the rushes run right up amun the leaves, making just a conwenient hidin'-place.

As I looked (and I had a pair o' eyes then like gimblets, bein' used to see in the dark) I saw a summat move among the rushes, and thought it might be a cow, for they are fond of grubbing about in the water, but, although it was so dark, I could tell it was no cow, it was too long in the legs.

I watched it, and watched it, and then I could make it out to be a man.

"That's that willain Sam," thinks I, and I was just agoin' to step ashore to see, when the revenue officer called out from the cabin:

"Here, I want to speak to yer! Ha' yer got a drop o' spirits aboard, for we feel cold awaitin' about so long arter yew."

"Not a toothful," I say, "not enow to wet a mouse's whiskers, and if I had a bar'l you'd be none the better for it. Treating revenue men's like a mouse offerin' cheese to a cat."

He said no more on thet subject, but as't me if I had any firearms aboard.

Fust I said "No," then an idea struck me, and I say, "Yes, I've an old gun in the locker," and I stooped down and got her out.

"She's loaden," I say, "and to purvent accidents I'll let her off afore I hand her to you."

With that I stepped on deck, and taking a quick but steady aim at the black lump under the alder car, pulled the trigger.

Boomp! went the old flintlock, and splash! went suthin' I had aimed at, and then all was quiet as I hobbled into the cabin and giv' the gun up to the revenue officer. I must own I felt flusterated a bit, but no one noticed it, 'cause I was naterally upset at having a posse of gover'ment jokers aboard my wherry.

When daylight peeped out they ransacked the craft from stem to starn, and found just what I told 'em they would—nothin'!

Lor', how silly they fared! I never see such a set o' duzzy fules in all my life.

The officer say, "Yow've escaped this time, but if we do ketch you, look out for squalls, that's all."

He giv' me the old gun back, and that's the last I ever saw of him.

No one knows how glad I was to see his back, for all the time I was in mortal terrer for fear some of his men might go to the alder car and see suthin' that might put a bit o' hemp round my neck, but they didn't.

When all was quiet, I told Jason he could have a couple of hours in his bunk, while I took the dinghy and went up a deek to a farm on the left, as I wanted to see a farmer before he went to market.

It was now about four o'clock and broad daylight, and I wanted to see what was under the alder bushes without Jason seein' me, and afore any of the farm hands or marshmen were astir.

Jason soon hopped into his bunk, and then I dropped

down in the dinghy to the place I had fired the old gun at.

My heart bumped hard agin' my ribs when I pulled the rushes aside, for there lay a man, and before I looked at his face I know'd who it was.

*It was Sam Haylock!*

Poor faller, he was as dead as a herrin', shot all over the head.

I think the five minutes it took me to get him into my boat was about the skeeriest five minutes in my whole blessed life; I shook and duddered from head to fut.

I got him in at last, and cut some rushes and put over his body, 'specially his face, for his eyes worn't shut, but fared to look right threw me.

Away I pulled up the Ant, and along the east side of Barton Broad, to a thick bed o' reed, and there I heaved the poor faller over.

Down he went, and so as to perwent his risin' agin, I staked his clothes down with hazel sticks. Then I got a hull lot o' mould, and shot over him, and on that I pegged some reed roots, and the deed was done.

He desarved all he got, for it was him as peached to the revenue men, hopin' to get the reward, and half the wally of the cargo, but I bowled him out.

Of course, when he didn't come home, every one wondered what had become on him, and when it leaked out that I had been stopped by revenue men, the people who knowed

there was bad blood 'atwixt us, reckoned that he durn't face his wife and me, so had run away.

There's no mistakin' where Sam was buried, 'cause jist at the spot where I planted him, the reeds grow taller than anywhere else about the Broad, and, as I say to myself, they make him a regular nateral moniment; but no one, 'cept myself, can tell what make them reeds grow so 'mazin 'high, and I don't mean they ever shud.

# THE HAUNTED PHYSICIAN.




"ARISE! ARISE!!"

*The Haunted Physician*

# THE HAUNTED PHYSICIAN.

CHANCE, or the force of circumstances during travel, frequently brings one into strange places, and face to face with stranger people, and amongst the latter I set down Dr. Tring, a London specialist, whose acquaintance I made in the fens around Ely.

As everyone knows, the country between Cambridge and Wisbeach is flat, tame, and monotonous in the extreme, and many of the roads being straight, a person or object can be seen at a great distance along them.

It so happened, that one evening in the autumn, I was travelling across this English Sahara, quietly strolling with my hands behind my back, my horse drawing the caravan leisurely along the straight road near Waterbeech, when my eye rested on a tiny figure at about one thousand yards distance.

Having nothing better to do or to think about, I speculated as to whether the little figure was that of a man

or of a woman. As I presently neared the person, I perceived it was a man in a long black coat, who slowly meandered about the road in an aimless manner, finally sitting himself down at the roadside, upon the stump of a decayed willow.

No one was near him, yet he was using his hands for the purpose of gesticulation as if he were delivering a solution to some knotty point in an argument. I could only surmise that he was rehearsing a speech or lecture, or possibly he might be an actor studying his part.

On my approach, he suddenly ceased his address to an invisible audience, and placing his elbows on his knees, sank his face between his palms, as a man does when in despair or overwrought in mind.

I could not pass him thus without a word of sympathy, and therefore addressed him:

"My friend, you appear weary; maybe you are in pain? Can I do anything for you?"

He raised his hands from his face as I spoke, and the sight fairly startled me.

His skin was ashy pale, and his forehead puckered into premature wrinkles, yet the gentleman could not have been past the prime of life, and discolorations around the eyes pointed to want of rest. The eyes themselves wore a startled expression, turning restlessly from side to side, as if their owner expected someone to pounce upon him, or something dreadful to happen to him at any moment.

The stranger, who was well but negligently dressed, looked straight at me, but although his lips parted and moved he made no reply to my inquiry, merely looking at me from head to foot, as if measuring me up before speaking.

Again I spoke.

"My good sir, you appear distressed, what can I do for you? Do you feel ill? If so, I have a few medicaments in my caravan that may restore you, or at any rate, alleviate your present condition."

Slowly raising his hand, he tapped his forehead with his forefinger, and said:

"Thank you, you can do nothing for me, my trouble lies here."

Mad! I thought to myself, and, apparently, my looks gave the stranger a key to my thoughts, for he immediately continued, as a faint but ghastly attempt to smile crossed his countenance:

"No, not mad; I have a great trouble on my mind; a trouble born of my own want of foresight, of my foolish reliance upon my own powers as a physician and scientist. No, sir, I thank you for your courtesy, but neither you nor anyone else in this world can set right the wrong I have unwittingly done a fellow creature."

For some time I conversed with the poor haggard man, and found him perfectly rational in his remarks. His mind was evidently overwrought, and a cheering cup of tea, and a light supper, followed by a good night's rest, might do the poor gentleman great good.

I proffered my humble fare and equally humble shelter to the wayfarer, who, with tears of gratitude in his eyes, accepted my hospitality on condition that he might recompense me for what trouble and expense I might be put to in entertaining him.

Of course, I could not think of such a proceeding; my caravan is my castle and not a hotel, and those whom I invite, my guests and not my patrons.

The Doctor placed his purse on the table. It was a well-filled one, stuffed as I observed with notes and gold, but I bade him return it to his pocket if he did not wish to offend me, which he reluctantly did.

After supper he appeared quite cheerful, but told me, with many a sigh, that his great mental anxiety was brought about by want of sleep, he was a victim of terrible attacks of insomnia.

I suggested hypnotic sleep as a remedy, or rather, as a relief, but, on the mere mention of the words, some unaccountable terror seized him, and clutching my hand, he looked wildly in my eyes, and asked, eagerly:

"Have *you* the hypnotic power?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"Then," he cried, "for Heaven's sake exercise your power, and let me know at least a few hours' tranquillity and oblivion.

No second bidding was necessary, for I longed to learn the secret of so strange a man; one who possessed ample means, was highly educated, and a doctor of some eminence,

must have some strange revelation to make; especially as the retention of his secret threatened first to sap and finally to cause his noble mind to decay, and drag down his body in the fall. A few passes sufficed to place the poor gentleman in a trance state, and he sank down upon my bed with a heartfelt sigh of relief.

I had camped that night by the side of one of the *levels* —as the canals are called in those parts—and heard the Doctor's secret from his own lips, and, in recounting it, will call it "The Haunted Physician."

The poor distraught man slept well that night, and when I awoke him next day, both felt and looked a much refreshed individual.

* * * *

Only a week later, I read in a local paper that a dead body had been found floating in the River Ouse. I had no difficulty in recognising it, from the appended report of the inquest, as that of my unfortunate guest, Dr. Tring, of London.

## The Story as Told to Me.

I AM a physician and scientist, and although barely forty years of age, have quite a large practice, being a specialist in disorders and diseases of the brain.

Many of my cures, which have been highly extolled by the medical profession, are merely the outcome of a common-sense view of my patient's condition, and the judicious use of my power as a hypnotist. Animal magnetism is yet but little understood, either by professional gentlemen or the public in general, but I have not the least doubt that another decade will place it side by side and on an equality with electricity.

Its uses are manifold and powerful; but in its very potency it is apt to overstep the control of those who seek by its aid to cure some of the many diseases to which human flesh is heir.

I have a case, which to the present-day, unbelieving world may appear more like some fantastic story told by a madman, than as a sober, solid, scientific fact; but my own wretched existence is ample proof that what I state is truth.

I am an honourable man, and my word is my bond inviolate, and during the years I have been in practice I have done nothing in my professional career which remains

as a black spot in my memory. All has been straightforward in my practise, and no regret lingers in my mind at having taken advantage of a patient in any way.

But, alas! one case has come under my notice which has given me great concern, and that is the strange case which I will now describe; one that has not yet ended, and may *never* end, although my own life must soon cease.

Although forty years of age, I have never entered the bonds of wedlock, but I should have done so two or three years since, had not another stepped in and secured the prize whilst I hesitatingly dallied with my opportunity.

My rival, some ten years my junior, like Julius Cæsar, came, saw, and conquered; but although the marriage was a happy one, it was but of brief duration, for in twelve months the lady died, and Z——-, my rival, being over fraught with grief, became very morose to those about him, and signs of his mind giving way at length showed themselves, the paroxysms finally becoming as frequent and of as long duration as his lucid intervals.

He fully knew his position, and recognising my skill in such cases, came to me, begging that I would do what I could for him.

Although I could not help looking upon him as a past rival, yet, for my old love's sake, I felt great sympathy for the poor fellow, and promised to take him under my professional care for a month or two if he would consent to reside in my house.

Although he came to me of his own accord, yet he appeared to be somewhat distrustful in his manner; but this I simply took as a display or phase of his sad affliction, born of the inert coldness which had naturally sprung up between us since he carried off my only object of affection.

Anyhow, there was an indefinite something of a repellent nature between us, which was only covered by a veneer of friendliness, more apparent than real.

Z—— expressed, in glowing terms, his faith in my skill as a specialist in cases of brain-worry such as his, and agreed to stay with me for a few weeks, if I would sign an agreement that I should use no violence to him, give him no harmful drug, allow him full licence to roam whithersoever he chose about my house or grounds, and to do my utmost to restore him to a condition of healthiness of body and soundness of mind.

I took such an absurd proposition as a phase of my patient's malady, and to soothe his feeble mind, did as he wished, signing the document which he most laboriously drew up.

Having thus humoured him, I was somewhat surprised to find that even my word and my sign-manual had not completely satisfied him, for a few minutes later he drew forth a Bible from his breast pocket, bidding me swear, with my right hand upon the book, that I would, to the best of my ability, faithfully carry out the tenets of the document I had just signed!

Being an honourable man, whose word is his bond, I had no hesitation, and did as I was requested. I swore: and that earnestly and truthfully, for I had no wish to do other than what was for the benefit of poor Z——.

He returned that evening to his home in Kent, but a couple of days after entered my house as a patient, and as such I gave him my utmost attention.

For a week I watched him carefully, and noted that it was a case of melancholia and insomnia, working upon a brain which had never, at any period, been over strong; and having thus diagnosed the case, felt hopeful of showing very beneficial results within a few weeks, providing my patient carried out my instructions to the letter, which he would probably be eager to do.

I cheered him up with bright conversation, and soon found that by walking and talking with him, and giving him lively books to read, I gradually weaned him from the one great theme upon his mind—his dead wife.

Tonics, exercise, baths of various kinds, and other means which I tried had splendid results upon his melancholy state; but try what I would, I could make but little impression upon the insomnia, which frequently undid by night the good he had received by day. The terrible sleeplessness and restlessness of my patient both puzzled and vexed me. I would with his consent, try hypnotism, to see if, by that means, I could induce a quiet trance state that would give the needful rest to his brain.

He was quite agreeable, and I tried the experiment with such a capital result that I frequently repeated it, gradually lengthening the sleep in which I placed him.

It so happened, that at this very time I read the report of a man having been kept in a trance state for thirty days, and the idea occurred to me that I might, with advantage, prolong the trance state in Z——'s case.

I put the idea to the test, first for three days, and subsequently for a week, and the improved condition of my patient gave me very strong hopes that I might in a short time bring about a perfect cure of his distressing malady, and once more place him in his family circle.

Warranted by my former experiments, I consulted with Z——, pointing out to him that, probably, one prolonged brain rest would effect his complete and permanent recovery.

I suggested trying a trance of a fortnight's duration, but he wished to see if a month would not be even better, especially as he also had heard of the subject who had remained in a trance at a certain place in London for that period without any inconvenience, except a somewhat large waste of flesh, which was rapidly regained after the close of the experiment.

Such a long period as a month I would not, however, consent to, and Z—— then pleaded earnestly for three weeks, and finally, not to unduly irritate him, and cause a relapse in his condition, I consented to a trance of twenty days' duration.

On the 28th of April, 189-, my patient retired to bed at 10 p.m., and at that hour I attended him, and hypnotised him strongly.

On the 29th, pulse and respiration being normal, I simply made a few passes over him.

On the 30th, I received a telegram from Gibraltar, asking me to come out at once to professionally attend Lord P——, who had met with a somewhat serious accident whilst yachting. He would not detain me more than a couple of days.

I was in a dilemma.

Here, on the one hand, was Z——, just placed in a trance state for twenty days, and to whom I had given both word and bond to do my best, and on the other was rich Lord P——, one of my best patients. It meant either staying at home and earning a few pounds, or taking a trip of a fortnight's duration and returning with a fee of a couple of hundred guineas in my pocket, besides all my travelling expenses.

I looked at the sleeping Z——, as I held the telegram in my hand.

He appeared comfortable enough, and there was no need to awaken him for another eight ten days.

What should I do? Should I leave my patient in a trance and go and earn my big fee, or should I wire back to Lord P—— and decline?

The P. and O. steamer was due to sail next day, May 1st. I should be in Gibraltar by the 6th. Suppose I

remained in attendance upon his lordship for four days, or say even a week, instead of the two days mentioned in the telegram, even then I should be home again before the 18th of May, on which day I had promised to awaken Z——.

Why not embrace the opportunity, and go?

I did.

Next morning I packed up, looked at Z——, whose pulse, temperature, and breathing were perfectly normal, strengthened his trance by a few vigorous passes, locked the door of his room, putting the key in my pocket, and by noon was on the deck of the P. and O. steamer *Oceana*, lying in Tilbury Docks.

I arrived safely at Gibraltar on the 6th of May, as I had anticipated, and at once attended upon his lordship. His accident was, after all, not a very dangerous one, indeed, my presence was scarcely necessary, his perfect recovery in a week or two at most being a moral certainty, but my presence and skilful bandaging pleased him, and allayed any anxiety he may have had whilst under the care of Spanish surgeons.

It was arranged that I should return to England by the P. and O. steamer *Java* on the 12th inst.

That, I informed his lordship, would suit me admirably, as I had important business in London on the 18th.

"Then," said he, "would it be asking too much of you if I requested you to take a run over to Tangier, in my steam launch, to see my secretary, poor fellow, who is

down with a terrible gash in his thigh, caused by the tusk of a wild boar, the same animal which wounded me?"

"So long as I leave Gibraltar by the *Java* on the 12th, my time is entirely at the disposal of your lordship," was my reply.

On the 9th I crossed over in the launch, which had a crew of five men, saw the badly gashed thigh of the secretary, which was progressing very favourably, and after dinner asked the skipper to take me for a run along the coast, southward, as the heat on land was too much for me. He was delighted with the idea, and we steamed south for about three hours, to the spot where both his lordship and his secretary had been wounded when chasing a wild boar, "pig-sticking" being a favourite sport in Morocco.

"We have plenty of time, Doctor, what do you say to a couple of hours ashore? I have some guns and ammunition on board, and you may as well have a little sport upon your first visit to Morocco." This from the skipper.

I readily accepted, and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves among the quail and other birds until dusk, when we again turned the bow of the launch northward.

The twilight was but of a few minutes' duration, and night quickly closed down upon us, as we sat discussing tea in the comfortable and luxuriously furnished little cabin.

The skipper, engineer, and I were in the cabin, while the cook, fireman, and deck hand had charge of the little vessel, as she steamed quietly along the coast.

The skipper was just in the midst of one of his humorous yarns, when there was a sudden shouting from our men above, which caused us to make for the deck, but before we reached it, there came a crash, and some furious yells, and —— I knew no more.

* * * *

When I awoke, I was sitting in a tangled valley of tropical grasses and shrubs, with my hands tied behind my back, and feeling sore and stiff all over, while by my side, bound hand and foot, was the engineer of Lord P——'s launch.

Evidently we were prisoners.

I felt half dead—being both bruised and famished.

I looked behind me, and beheld our warders, four half-naked natives, stretched out asleep in various attitudes, with their arms beside them.

It was but early dawn, and my wet clothes told me that I had been in the sea.

I nudged the engineer, and gently awakened him, when he informed me in a whisper that we had been run down by a native craft, and were the sole survivors.

My adventures in the interior, whither we were taken, and sold as slaves, would make a decent-sized volume, but as they have nothing to do with poor Z——, I must abridge my narrative, and say, that after ten terrible weeks' servitude, the engineer and I were fortunate enough to make our escape from bondage, and after terrible privations, we reached Tangier in safety, where we had an audience with

the Shereeff, who received us very kindly—ordering our filthy rags to be cast off, and other clothing brought for us.

Through our Consul at Gibraltar, I was enabled to obtain a passage to England on the Orient liner *Ormuz*, which left Gibraltar on September 3rd, and on the 9th I was once more at Tilbury Docks, arriving home at Hampstead the same evening, after an absence of one hundred and thirty-four days, or nineteen weeks instead of less than three!

My return quite startled my housekeeper, who went into violent hysterics, as she had quite given me up as dead.

Then came the dread ordeal of visiting the room in which lay the body of Z——.

Of his presence in the house my housekeeper was quite unaware, as I had informed her on my departure that she would not again see him until my return—thereby leading her to infer that he had, for the period of my absence, returned to his own home.

I fortified my nerves with a strong glass of cognac, but as I placed my hand upon the handle of the lock, to unfasten the door of the dread room, I trembled with fear, and big beads of perspiration oozed from my forehead as I turned the key in the creaking lock.

"Had it come to this," I said to myself, "that I, an eminent surgeon, physician, and scientist, must now take from my name the row of letters setting forth the degrees and titles which followed after my name, and in their place substitute the word 'Murderer'?"

I dare not answer myself. I could only think—"What, after all these months, will he look like ?"

Mustering the courage so necessary in a medical man, I unlocked the door, nervously re-locking it on the inside.

Then, with audibly beating heart and palsied limbs, I took the lamp, and advanced to the bed.

Merciful Heaven ! What is it that lies before me ?

A Cadaver !

A Mummy ! !

A Corporeal Spectre ! ! !

I nearly fainted at the sight.

Z——'s body was just as I had left it, as regards position, but his features were so altered as to be totally unrecognisable. The flesh had gone from the cheeks, leaving behind a shrivelled, greyish-brown, parchment-like skin. The lips were drawn, flat and fleshless, against the teeth, giving a hideous grinning expression, while the eyes had retreated, deep beneath the cavernous brow. The nose, hooked and horny like an eagle's beak, was a ghastly adjunct to the hideous countenance of a mummy.

I turned down the bed covering, and examined the body.

It was perfectly fleshless and withered. Ribs like hoops on a cask, fingers like claws, and a skin like the dried epidermis of a dead toad.

Such was Z——, on my return !

I left the dreadful chamber of death, and retired to my own room.

I paced the floor ; I cursed my stupidity in leaving my

patient, uncared for; I undressed and got into bed, but sleep would not visit my tired and aching eyes.

Rival! Murderer! Shame! Dishonour! and such words presented themselves to my mind, and banned sleep so effectually that I did not lose consciousness of my surroundings the whole night through, and when I arose, at daybreak, feverish and tired, I could not eat my usual toast nor drink my coffee; my thoughts were riveted upon the tenant of the room above.

I could do nothing but think of Z——.

He occupied my every thought, and paralysed my every faculty.

What should I do with the body?

Should I discover it to the police, or to my medical friends, and make a clean breast of it; or should I subtly remove it, after first dismembering it, and so hide it, piece by piece, from the eye of man for ever?

I took a little brandy to help me in my cogitation. I felt firmer in my nervous system, and proceeded to the room above, to view the body once more.

Again, I stood in the presence of the dread thing, and trembled at my vile handiwork.

Yes, there it lay, dead and leathery as the great Rameses himself. Unconsciously, I laid my hand upon the wrinkled forehead, and mechanically made the passes over the cadaverous face, which should, long months ago, have brought health to the cheek and lustre to the eyes now closed in death.

Again, I placed my palm upon the wrinkled brow, stroking it in sympathy with my thoughts of sorrow for my poor rival, when it suddenly struck me that there was an absence of the clammy coldness associated usually with death.

I passed my palsied hand down the limbs.

They were cold, dry, and stiff!

It appeared strange to me that the forehead and cranium should exhibit no sense of coldness to the touch, although it was observable in all other parts of the body.

What could it mean?

As I looked down at the dead face, with my hand still upon the forehead, I observed a trembling of the eyelids.

I surmised that it was caused by my own throbbing pulse and trembling hand resting upon the shrivelled skin of the forehead.

I removed my hand.

Still the quivering of the eyelids continued.

Heavens! Did some spark of life yet remain?

Was there yet some probability that animation might again be renewed?

Might I yet remove the stigma of murder from my conscience?

Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, I set to work, with beating heart, to do all in my power to restore animation to the body of my friend; for friend he must henceforth be, as his resurrection would again restore me to an honourable profession and status in life, whereas his death could but make me a criminal.

I seized the attenuated frame of my friend, and lifted it from the bed. It was exceedingly light, and *rigor mortis* not particularly observable. The body was awkward to handle, but still showed some signs of lissomness at the principal joints.

A warm bath had suggested itself, and I straightway carried the mummified Z—— into the bath-room.

I intended seating the body in a chair, but its joints were not sufficiently supple, and as I left it a moment while I turned the taps on, the horrid thing slipped from its awkward position, and slid quickly to the floor with a husky rattle, sending a thrill through me which made my hair rise upon my head. I noticed the sound was like the fall of a faggot of dry brushwood.

I calmed my perturbed nerves, and although I still felt scared, as I looked at the object lying upon the floor, yet I still retained a vague hope that a flickering spark of life might yet be left, and when the bath was half filled with warm water, I plunged the body in, leaving only the head above the surface.

I worked upon my subject with a delirious energy, suppling the shrivelled limbs with my shaking hands, until the arm and leg joints would flex to some slight extent.

I tried to pour brandy between the leathery lips, but the tongue and gullet were like parchment, and rejected the liquor, which, I hoped, would give some energy to my strange patient.

Anon, I made frantic passes to awaken my friend, calling him by name, whispering cheering words into his parched ear, and even patting and smacking the cheeks, with loud cries of:

"Wake, Z——, awake, and look at me! I have returned, my friend, awake!"

As if my desponding cries had been heard, the eyelids, which I had sedulously bathed, again began to tremble, and then—the left eye slowly opened, fixing its gaze straight upon me!

Alas! the gaze was like that of the sphinx—stony and dead.

No lustre was in the orb, which was flabby and wrinkled; it was *the eye of a man long dead!*

I recoiled in horror, and released my hold of the body, which immediately collapsed, and slid beneath the water, with a gurgling sound, as the air and water commingled in the cavernous chest, sending up streams of bubbles from the mouth and nostrils.

For an instant, I stood aghast; but quickly recovering my self-possession, I rushed to the side of the bath, and plunging my hands into the water, drew my friend hastily to the surface.

What should I do next?

There was, without a doubt, some, if only a particle, of life still smouldering in the dried frame.

For another hour I tried everything I could devise to promote animation, but at length looked around in blank

despair, for all my efforts did not go beyond a certain point in reviving my friend.

After another long series of attempts, I flung my exhausted self into a chair, exactly facing Z——, and for a long time sat motionless and dazed at the predicament in which I found myself.

Z——'s limbs had become supple enough to conform to the posture required for sitting in a chair, and there he sat, awkward as a broken lay figure, his whole aspect being that of a gigantic, attenuated monkey.

The skin of the face had so far recovered its elasticity as to allow the lower jaw to drop, showing the beautifully white teeth and dried tongue.

The eyes were half open, and staring straight forward to where I sat, while the long arms hung loosely at the shoulders, leaving the wrists and claw-like fingers lying in the bony lap.

I can think of no other word to describe the appearance of my friend but "hideous," yet his form was so absolutely awful that that word conveys but a faint idea of the object before me.

Bah! It was an appalling nightmare—a chimera!

I thought of Lazarus of old, who was raised from absolute death to vigorous life again, after lying in the grave three days; but when I reflected upon the incident and its surroundings, my utter helplessness only became the more apparent.

The poor object before me was evidently *not* dead, or the

past months would have brought about corporeal decay, whereas Z——'s flesh was but shrunk, and in no way disintegrated.

What mighty words were used by the necromancers of old in their occult and, at times, unholy practices! Alas! I could think of none that would help me, none that were at all applicable to the present case. The more I cast about in my mind for suitable words, the more my poor brain became confused, and I sat down in despair, till presently the absurdly simple word "Arise!" suggested itself, and like a drowning man clutching at a floating leaf to save himself, so did my mind seize the simple word which had presented itself.

"ARISE! ARISE!!" and, in my delirious state, I fairly shrieked the word.

And as I vehemently uttered the words, looking straight into the dead eyes before me, the body, to my intense surprise and terror, made an effort to carry out my wish and stand on its feet.

Then, suddenly clutching the arms of my chair, I was aware that my hair again rose upon my head with horrific fright, for Z—— stood upright on his feet before me!

I could not move, I was paralysed with fear. "Would the thing come towards me?" I asked myself. "Had the body regained life to take revenge upon me?"

With terror-stricken eyes, I watched the solid spectre, for such it seemed to me, but to my relief it made no effort to walk, simply standing where it had risen, without attempting locomotion.

Its skinny arms dangled at its sides, its sightless orbs gazed forward into vacancy.

What did all this mean?

What *could* I do?

I felt I was going mad, I was seized with a peculiar impulse to scream, but mastered the feeling by a violent effort of will.

I had, unconsciously, risen from my chair, with my hands tightly clenched at my sides and my teeth fast set, but calming my feelings, I again sat down to collect my scattered wits.

I fell into a state of musing. I went seriatim through all that had happened during the past few hours of attempted resuscitation.

At last, I came to the word "Arise." I knew I had repeated it several times, and that the figure had, at my bidding, arisen from the chair.

My senses did not deceive me, it was no wild hallucination, for there it still stood before me.

I would touch it.

Yes, there was no deception, it was palpably material, and I was not dreaming.

Then came a sudden inspiration.

Was Z—— still alive, but fallen into such a state of collapse that, although he could hear and obey, he could not signify either by sign or speech that he was cognisant of my presence?

Going quietly up to the figure, I said rather loudly in its ear, "Walk!"

Immediately it obeyed, and took several steps, until brought up by the wall, against which it struck, with a dull rattle.

Good! my hypothesis was correct.

I passed nearly the whole day experimenting upon the living cadaver, and towards evening desisted, for I made a terrible discovery which gave me great uneasiness, and banished all hope that my friend would ever return to his normal condition of a sensible human being.

My discovery was, that although *the body was dead, the brain or spirit, the governing power of the system, still lived!!*

* * * *

In due time, by a process of anointing the leathery covering of the joints, the living spectre could move about in a staggering manner, and I could not only make it obey my will, but it began to display *an intelligence of its own.*

It could sit, stand, and walk; finding its way about the house at a snail's pace—but being sightless, often fell over obstacles, coming down with a rattling crash, and scaring the servants to such an extent that they would not remain in the house, but packed up their trunks and left my service, although I endeavoured to persuade them it was simply an ordinary case of shrinking from a peculiar wasting disease.

Fortunately, my old housekeeper still remained with me.

In whatever room in the house I happened to be, I

seemed to have some strange attraction for the animated mummy, who would invariably find me out, and come shambling through the doorway with rattling limbs, and being aware of my presence, would fold his legs and sit down upon the floor, turning his lantern jaws and sunken eyes to whatever portion of the room I happened to be occupying.

It was terrible to be thus haunted in one's own house all the livelong day, and the evil thought came to my mind more than once of destroying the gruesome terror, and thus ridding myself of its obnoxious presence for ever.

I verily believe I should have carried out the idea, but one day, in a passion, I ordered the ghostly thing to leave the room, or I would immediately break it limb from limb.

The figure immediately obeyed, but in half an hour, to my great consternation, returned, and, rattling up to me as I sat at my study table, laid a crumpled paper upon my shoulder.

I took it in my trembling hand.

It was our written compact, by which I swore to use *no violence,* nor administer any noxious drug, but to allow Z—— to roam whithersoever he wished about my house or grounds!

I laid the paper down, peeping over my shoulder at my hideous guest.

*Thought* still remained to him evidently, and my threat to dismember him had evidently been understood.

No, come what might, I made up my mind that I would not violate my oath, and would not in any way seek to destroy the hideous object which my hypnotic power and inattention had created.

It was a simple matter of retributive justice, and I bowed to my just but awful doom of living my daily life with a dead companion.

So I argued with myself, but in time the monotony of my being began to tell upon me, for I dared not leave the house even for an hour during the day, for fear someone should call and discover my dread secret, and I felt that my reason sat but weakly on its throne.

At table, the mummy frequently sat opposite me, its leathery jaws keeping time with mine, as it went through the pantomimic action of masticating food which would never more find a way to its shrivelled stomach, which had become as a mere dried skin bag—a parched Eastern water-bottle.

I could never tell from what nook or corner the wretched Z—— would greet me with his rattling bones and crackling skin; he seemed to be ubiquitous.

Sometimes, on returning from my evening visits, I would find the dreadful figure ensconced in my bed, at which times, without using undue violence, I would place it outside my bedroom door, which I usually locked on the inside. Frequently, at such times, I would hear the skinny figure fall down the whole flight of stairs, but it was soon on its feet again, moving away in creaky

little jerky steps to some other portion of the house. Its limbs being lifeless, it had no sense of feeling, and bruises troubled it not.

My health, at length, began to show unmistakable signs of breaking up, and I came to the conclusion that there remained but one thing I could possibly do to save myself from the lunatic asylum, and that was to leave my friend, the living spectre, in sole charge of my house, whilst I wandered forth, Heaven knew whither.

I had no alternative. Either Z—— or I must leave the house. For Z—— to leave the house was impossible; so I took the initiative by discharging my old housekeeper with a handsome present to secure her silence, and gave forth to the various tradesmen that I had been suddenly called abroad on a professional visit to an Eastern potentate, and that I might be absent several months.

My patients I placed in the hands of a couple of medical friends, and thus, my plans being made, I withdrew my ready cash from the bank, and have started upon a pilgrimage whithersoever my fancy may lead me.

Poor Z—— has undisputed charge of my house until the parish authorities or others may see fit to break into it, and then what a terrible sight awaits them!

Such horror has seized me, that I feel and know that if I but encountered the living mummy again I should fall dead at its feet. The ordeal of again entering its presence, especially in my own house, where I left it many weeks ago, would certainly kill me.

No power on earth can restore its organism, as every fibre and tissue of its body is as dry and lifeless as spent bark from a tannery; its joints are mobile, and that is all.

The hypnotised body is as dead as Cæsar, but the brain, having been hypnotised in a fairly healthy state, was *asleep when the body died*, so that the spirit which is the essence of the brain did not die with the animal body, but, like the living soul or spirit which it is, *lives on for ever*.

Ah! my own poor brain, how long will you withstand the dreadful strain placed upon you?

Heaven grant me death before the lingering madness I feel creeping over me!

# THE SAILOR'S JOKE.



"I Sailed Over Will's Head in a Most Supernatural Manner."

*The Sailor's Joke.*

# THE SAILOR'S JOKE.

It seems to be my fate that, go where I will, I am bound to fall in with sailors, whether the locality be inland, or some maritime place.

Wishing to see something of the Valley of the Dove, I shaped my course, on one occasion, to Derbyshire, and, as a first halting-place, stayed at Ashbourn, which, in all conscience, is far enough from the sea, and, consequently, one would imagine from sailors; but strangely enough, the very first person I conversed with was a gentleman in the Royal Navy—a chief petty officer, who was staying in the pretty town upon a visit to some relatives.

Just out of the town, on the road to M——, is a little river, spanned by an ancient bridge, and as there was good herbage near it, I unharnessed my horse, and tethered him on the bank of the stream, in the meantime busying myself, as was my wont, in the preparation of my evening, and heartiest meal of the day.

It was a lovely evening, and only an occasional passer-by gave me the seal of the day, as he or she strolled quietly along the velvety turf at the roadside.

When my meal was almost ready for consumption, I was accosted by a dapper little man in dark clothing, who, in his evening stroll, paused to look at me and my trim van.

"Lucky man," said he, "to be able to enjoy an everlasting holiday on wheels. Good business this, my friend! Have you room for a partner? Such a life would just suit me; why, it's as roving a commission as a life on the ocean, with not half the unpleasantness and risk. You can laugh at rough weather with never a fear of shipwreck, although you certainly do stand some little risk of being boarded by a pirate. May I sit down and have a short chat with you?"

Of course I acquiesced, and found the stranger such a capital companion that I invited him to spend an hour or two with me, and share my meal.

He readily accepted my invitation, and we enjoyed each other's society so much that he spent several days with me, showing me some of the most beautiful scenery of the Dove, and, of course, during his stay in my caravan, I had the pleasure of hearing a story from him, one which teaches a good moral, that fun is fun all the world over, but that practical jokes may be, and often are, carried to a point at which bad results accrue, some of which have sad endings.

To be "merry and wise" is an admirable saw, but with the wisdom left out, merriment frequently gives place to the deepest sorrow, as my naval friend had found to his cost

## The Story as Told to Me.

I TAKE it that it is no uncommon thing for two men to fall in love with the same woman, neither is it unusual when the favoured one gains her hand and leads her to the altar, for the rejected lover to quit the vicinity which has no further charm for him.

Such was identically my case.

Will Jordan and I both paid our respects to Alice Bowman, who was a maid at H—— Hall, the seat of Sir John A——.

I was groom to Sir John, and stood about five feet nothing in my shoes, while big Will stood about six feet two in his, a great strapping, broad-shouldered gamekeeper.

I do not wonder at Alice choosing him in preference to me, for he was certainly a very fine, manly young fellow, whilst I was a harum-scarum little chap, only about up to his shoulder, and with a very plain face, and nothing to recommend me but a daring spirit, and a firm seat, for although it may be egotistical, I must say that when in the saddle nothing daunted me. I was light, and had good hands, and for miles around had not my superior in training a horse for the hunting-field.

Well, Will got Alice; and I, being love-sick and dejected, refused to join the party in the servants' hall on

the evening of the wedding; for Sir John never did things by halves, but provided my rival and his bride with a capital wedding supper, at which he made a neat speech, and gave them a handsome present, for Will was a great favourite of his.

I went off to bed, complaining of being unwell, but I could hear the frequent bursts of laughter and sounds of singing, as the merry party enjoyed themselves in the hall hard by, and as I lay and thought of my lost love, ideas of revenge stole across my mind.

I will not say what my thoughts were, but they were bad, and so unlike me, that I grew half afraid of myself, and finally, when the voices were hushed and the lights all out, I dressed, packed up a hand-bag, and quitted the Hall, having determined to run away to sea, that I might either drown my trouble, or the sea drown me.

Being a fair scholar, but no sailor, I had some difficulty in obtaining admission to the crew of a man-of-war, but by a good piece of luck I tumbled into a very good billet by having my name inscribed on the books of H.M.S. *Imperial*, as coachman to Admiral S——.

For nearly five years I was away on the China Station, and on arrival in England, made up my mind to go down to Norfolk, and see my old people, and enjoy a few weeks in my old haunts.

It was on December 23rd, 187—, that we were paid off, and on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, I took my seat in the train bound for my old home.

I reached W—— (which was the nearest station to H——, where my parents resided) at about 10 p.m., and had then seven miles to walk, a longish pull after a long railway journey, but I was young and ardent, and a few miles more or less had no troubles for me, especially when loving hearts were to be met at the end of the walk.

I had not advised my parents of my return, anticipating the fun of giving them a Christmas surprise.

Before leaving W——, I called in at the "King's Arms" to refresh the inner man, and in the host's own little room made a splendid attack on a huge joint of beef, and although I went at it in a most energetic manner, I was defeated at last, and was sitting in a contented frame of mind thinking of making a move, when I caught the sound of a voice I knew in the bar-parlour.

If I was not greatly mistaken, it was the voice of Will Jordan, my quondam rival!

I peeped between the little red curtains which screened the glass door leading into the bar-parlour, and saw Will, seated amid a number of boon companions, who appeared to be having some piece of banter at his expense.

I quietly unlatched the door, and opened it an inch or two, so as to hear what was the subject of conversation.

Will Jordan was evidently in a merry mood, or rather in a boastful mood, and his flushed face proved that he had found Bacchus a god to his taste.

It appeared that most of those assembled were the bell-ringers, waiting for the time when they might go to the

church and usher in the glad Christmas morn, as is the custom in the Eastern Counties.

The topic on the *tapis* was the White Lady, a ghostly visitant, who is supposed to haunt the church steeple, and only show herself at Christmas. The White Lady, or her double, appears to haunt church towers in many parts of England, and is, therefore, a somewhat common kind of apparition, and one that, being familiar, should not cause fear to a brave man.

The ringers were speaking, with awe, of the shadowy White Lady, and Will was laughing at them as a lot of boys likely to be scared with a scooped-out turnip on a pole.

They in turn jeered him, and told him that with all his courage he dare not go up in the ringing chamber, and sit there in the dark for a quarter of an hour.

Will snapped his fingers at them, and at length a wager was made.

The gamekeeper expressed himself willing to sit alone in the tower from 11.30 to 11.45, at which time the ringers were to take their places and commence their ringing.

Two gallons of ale was the stake; and if he sat the time out the ringers were to pay for it, but if he came out of the tower before 11.45 chimed he was to pay.

"Why, together!" cried Will, excitedly, "I think no more of sitting a quarter an hour in a church tower, than I du of going my rounds on a dark night, and there ain't half the dangers. That ale's mine, lads, and let's ha' some on't now! Let's ha' a gallon to go on with, landlord."

Now a brilliant idea struck me. Why should I not personate the White Lady, and give my old rival a fright, so as to pay off an old score?

Why not?

I sat, and cogitated, and planned how I should proceed. I put a piece of candle and a cork, which I found on a shelf, into my pocket, supplementing them with a piece of chalk and some matches. These were the "properties" for my performance.

I rang the bell, paid my score, and wishing the landlord good-night and a "Merry Christmas," stepped out into the dark road leading right past the church, which stood only a couple of hundred yards away.

If the door of the tower were unlocked, I would see what I could do to manufacture a ghost, but if it were fastened, I would walk on homeward, and think no more of it.

I walked quietly up to the little oak door, and found it not only unlocked, but actually ajar.

Now for my first and only appearance in the character of "The White Lady."

It was now a quarter to eleven, so it would be forty-five minutes before the bold Will came to his tryst, providing he were sober enough to come at all; this would give me ample time to prepare everything for his reception, and to hold a dress rehearsal to see that everything was in working order.

I turned the handle of the door leading into the nave,

and found it was not locked, and taking advantage of this circumstance, groped my way to the vestry, where I obtained three white surplices and a black cassock. I also took a skull from a shelf, and with these repaired to the ringing-chamber, where I lighted my piece of candle, and stood it in a corner.

I whitened my face with the chalk, and burning the cork in the flame of the candle, applied it to the orbits of my eyes, making them appear cavernously deep, so as to represent a skull as much as possible.

I also blackened the corners of my mouth, so that that aperture appeared to stretch from jaw to jaw.

Two of the surplices I tied around my legs, leaving them trailing behind, and the third I put on over my head, leaving only my face showing.

The matches I dipped in a pan of water, and with the damp phosphorus smeared the skull all over, and then, everything being prepared, I looked about for an advantageous place in which to secrete myself.

I took as expansive a view of my surroundings as the dim rays of a tallow candle would allow, and at a distance of ten or twelve feet from the floor, noticed two deeply recessed windows. One was on the north, and the other on the south side of the tower, so that they were opposite each other, while between them descended the eight long bell-ropes, each with its fuzzy loop of worsted to give handhold and foothold to the ringer.

A brilliant idea at once occurred to me ; why not fasten

the upper end of one of the bell ropes, hauling it up first, so that the loop was on a level with one of the side windows; then, by putting my foot in the loop, I could swing myself right across the tower, from one side to the other.

Capital! Up the sixty-round ladder I quickly ran, and made the rope fast; then descending, I clambered into the embrasure-like window, and seized the loop of the rope.

Everything was now prepared, and I took great care to arrange my lower surplices so that they would hang well down, and make me appear an abnormal length. I had my damp matches with me, and rubbing my fingers on them, smeared the phosphorus over my face, and upon the skull.

To make sure that all would work smoothly, I indulged in a couple of flights from side to side of the tower, and managed it fairly well.

Then, hanging the black cassock across the aperture of the window, I crouched behind it, so as not to be seen immediately upon Will's entrance, and taking a last look round blew out the light.

As I arranged my vestments, I heard a noise below, then the sound of unsteady feet on the winding stone stairs, and finally the hard breathing of the burly game-keeper, as he dimly appeared in view.

He moved unsteadily about, looking in all the corners, as if he suspected someone might play him a trick, and then,

pausing in the middle of the floor, he gave a satisfied grunt, as he found that no one but himself was in the tower.

Now came my part of the performance. I allowed my rival time to finish his inspection, and then commenced the performance by giving a sigh !

Will looked all around, but could see nothing.

Again I sighed, a little deeper and louder.

Will caught the sound better, and looked upward just as the cassock slipped from the pins with which it was sustained, and dropped lightly to the floor with an uncertain sound.

I was now exposed to view, but was so bundled up with my white envelopment, that I am sure Will could not make out my form in the very obscure light, although the skull and my face emitted a fitful, phosphorescent glow.

I heard him give a short, hoarse "Who's that?" as he turned his eyes full upon me.

At this moment I arose silently from my crouching position, and with the rope in my hands, prepared to swing across to the window in the opposite side of the square tower.

I saw the gamekeeper's hands rise with a gesture of alarm, and heard him give an inarticulate sound as of fear, as I launched myself for my flight.

I sailed over Will's head in a most supernatural manner, but on reaching the other window the rope had

so turned that I could not land upon the broad sill as I had anticipated, as I had my back turned towards it.

I made a frantic struggle to turn myself, but failed and then, with a sudden jerk, the loop in which I stood gave way, and at the same moment Will gave a scream, and fell prone to the floor, with me in a fluttering heap beside him.

I was greatly shaken, but not much hurt, as I fell partially on my feet.

Poor Jordan lay like a log of wood, and as void of sense; and now came my turn for a fright.

Here was a predicament; what was I to do? I ran about like a demented man.

I flew to the vestry, and restored the skull and vestments to their respective places; I hid all evidences of my deception, and tried to arouse Will, and partially succeeded, when I suddenly recollected I had made fast one of the ropes in the belfry above. Like a cat I clambered up the long ladder, and through the trap-door into the belfry, and had just succeeded in disengaging the hard knots into which my weight on the rope had pulled them, when I heard voices below. They were the voices of the ringers, as they walked through the churchyard to the tower.

I did not want to be seen in this stupid predicament, and resolved to remain where I was.

I found plenty of crevices in the floor, through which I could look down to the chamber forty feet below. I laid

flat on my stomach, and peered through one of the holes where the ropes were let through.

I strained my eyes in vain to make out the bulky form of Will Jordan below, but failed; it was too dark for me to see from such a height.

Now came the sound of feet and voices, as the ringers, with mirthful banter, came stumbling up the winding stairs. The first carried a lantern, and, as its feeble rays flickered across the floor, I beheld, to my astonishment, that my erstwhile rival had arisen from his recumbent position, and had disappeared!

In burst the noisy crew, and turned with one accord to a cupboard in the corner of the tower, the door of which stood open.

"Ha! ha! ha! Frightened to death—I told you so," said a loud voice, as its owner pointed to the cupboard, in which I could just catch a peep of the crouching form of Jordan.

"What's the matter, man? Are you trying to make game of us?" said the same loud voice. "Come out of it; what foolery is this, do you reckon?"

Will, in a hoarse, sepulchral voice, looked wildly around, and said:

"I've seen her!"

Some were inclined to laugh, but the more sober saw that something was amiss, and drew the shuddering form of the poor gamekeeper from his hiding-place. The poor fellow was evidently beside himself with terror, and

continually murmured, "I've seen her! I've seen her! Look! look! there!" accompanying his ejaculations by pointing to various parts of the tower.

With great difficulty, two of the strongest men carried the unfortunate gamekeeper down the narrow and awkward stairs, and that was the last I saw of him, except an imperfect view from between the louvre boards of the belfry window, as they carried him across the greensward to the lychgate.

I also felt nearly distraught, for fear I had unhinged the poor gamekeeper's mind permanently.

Then came the boom—boom—crash—crash—boom! of the great bells, as the ringers ushered in the Happy Morn, and thrusting my fingers into my ears, I sat distractedly upon an oaken beam, until the titanic sounds of what was beautiful tintinnabulary music to those in the village, but only a roar of inharmonious sound to me, should cease.

The pandemonium appeared never-ending, but like all things mundane, it at length ceased; and looking down, I saw the candles—which were stuck against the walls—being put out one by one, as each ringer donned his comfortable wraps and departed, leaving the chamber once more in darkness and silence.

I awaited until the bells chimed the half-hour past midnight, and then, palsied with cold, carefully retraced my steps down the ladder.

Once more I stood on the ringing-chamber floor, and

thought of all that had occurred in one brief hour, cursing myself for an unhung fool!

Then I thought the matter over, and half made up my mind to make a clean breast of the whole affair, but on reflection I concluded that such a proceeding could do neither me nor Will Jordan any good, and might turn out very awkwardly for me when the burly Will came to his sober senses.

If he lost his reason—well, I could not restore it; and if he recovered from the shock, what need for me to point out myself as the fool who caused all the bother?

I would start straight away off home, and probably I should hear no more of the matter, except as a matter of gossip, for I had so cleared away everything appertaining to my freak that no one would think of connecting me with the ghost.

Stumbling down the dusty and worn stone stairs, I found my way stopped on reaching the bottom, for the door was locked.

This caused me but little detention, for with the poker from the vestry I pressed the bolt of the lock back from the staple, and made my exit, after returning the poker to its proper place, leaving whomsoever it might concern to surmise that they had omitted to lock the door on departing.

I did not reach home till nearly 3 a.m., and, of course, found my people in bed, as they did not expect me. It soon woke them up, and after a hearty greeting, and a

vague attempt at eating some supper, I went to bed, only to rise at breakfast tired and unrefreshed with the short intervals of sleep I had fitfully snatched during the night.

Christmas Day was shorn of its attractions for me, I did everything mechanically, and at times gave strange answers to my friends, for my thoughts were away in the gloomy tower of W—— Church.

I dare not ask for any news of the events of Christmas Eve, but after two days of enervating suspense, I determined to borrow a trap and drive over to W—— and make inquiries, in a casual manner, as to the condition of Will Jordan.

On the second day after Christmas Day I drove over, and made my way to the "King's Arms" Inn, and on arrival found quite a number of people standing about its door-ways and yard, as if it had been market day, but I knew that was held on Thursday, and this was Friday.

I mixed with the little knot of people in the bar, and was informed, to my dismay, that the assembly was for the purpose of holding an inquest on Will Jordan, who died on the evening of Christmas Day, never having properly recovered from a fright received in the church tower during a drunken visit on Christmas Eve.

"The poor faller never know'd no one arter we found him that night all of a shake and dudder wi' fright, but kep' a calling out, 'I've sin her! I've sin her!" and making all mander o' queer faces, and pintin' about the rume as if he see'd summat like the White Lady what

frited him. Poor faller, he was a good sort, and as strong as a horse."

Such were the words of my informant, the landlord.

I dared not enter the room in which the inquest was to be held in half an hour's time, nor dared I gaze on the poor man I had so foolishly robbed of life ; but for a couple of hours drove aimlessly about to adjacent villages, at each of which I stopped a few minutes to feed my horse, or take a glass of ale for myself—merely to kill time and hear the gossip. Then I returned to W—— to learn the verdict.

It was a simple one—Death from natural causes ; primary cause fright, producing shock to the system.

I attended the funeral next day, and no sadder heart was there than the one which beat in my bosom, and as I gazed across the grave at my former love Alice, I made a mental resolve, which I have kept, even to the present day.

I vowed one-third of what I earned should be hers, and that promise I have religiously kept (knowing that it is the only reparation I can make her), by sending her, anonymously, postal orders for one-third of my salary as it becomes due.

I have read that every man has a skeleton in his cupboard, which haunts him even in his most joyous moments, and in my case it is certainly true, but being a bogey of my own making, it is the skeleton of my own folly.

# THE KNIGHT'S PENANCE.

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AMONG those who have at different times come under my persuasive influence, I can count several ladies; but I must own that the fair sex are very diffident about entering my caravan; it seems so much like entering a lion's den that they do wisely to remain on the right side of the door—the outside. Still, in my character of spider, I, now and again, entice a giddy fly into my parlour; but it is very seldom I can obtain from them a story worth recapitulating.

There seems to be three leading traits in a woman's character—love, rivalry, and jealousy—and on these three traits their stories all hinge: as motives for a plot very admirable in their way, but a trifle threadbare.

Of course, there are exceptions; and, probably, the following story is the best I have heard from female lips.

The circumstances under which I obtained the narrative are these:

One bleak day towards the end of September, I happened to be crossing Exmoor, in Somersetshire, when, as I was halting for my mid-day meal, a tall, well-dressed woman, of about fifty years of age, tapped at my door, and asked me if I could point out to her the nearest road to Dulverton.

It was commencing to rain, and I invited her into my van, as there were no houses that I knew of for some miles. She was very tired and hungry, and having quite lost her way, gladly shared my meal at my pressing invitation.

I informed her that she was quite eight miles from Dulverton, and as I had no particular road to travel I would give her a lift of five or six miles, when the rain moderated, if she would allow me.

She was very pleased, and said she would wait till three o'clock, it being then nearly half past one. She informed me she was a spiritualistic medium, and was going to take part in a séance to be held at eight o'clock that evening at Dulverton Town Hall.

She was a fine-looking woman, tall, shapely, and with a refined and resolute countenance.

We chatted upon spiritualism, hypnotism, and kindred topics for a short time, when I happened to ask casually:

"Do you believe in demoniacal possession?"

"Certainly I do," was my guest's immediate reply. "I have known a case in which a lady well known to me figured prominently; indeed, it occurred in the eastern part

of England within the past few years, and although it was known to several persons, yet it has never been bruited about so as to attract public attention.

"Indeed," I replied, "you astonish me! I have searched for years for an authentic case of bodily possession by a malignant spirit, but in vain. Perhaps you would relate the circumstances of the case you mention, for it would give me the greatest pleasure to learn the facts.

To my regret the lady replied:

"You will pardon me, I am sure, but the case was so nearly connected with myself that I would rather allow it to remain unknown, even to such a gallant gentleman as yourself."

Here was a chance I must not miss; but how to obtain the story against the lady's will quite puzzled me.

Could I make a victim of so fair a creature?

I scarcely dared.

I adroitly turned the subject to hypnotism again, and referring to my own accomplishments in that occult study, requested of my guest to be allowed to try my power upon her, especially as she appeared to be such a capital medium.

"Why do you wish particularly to try your skill upon me?" she asked.

I was rather taken aback for a suitable reply, but—and I say it with shame—a lie came to my rescue and aided me to my required end.

"Madam, I have a sick brother in London, and by your clairvoyant power I would know his present state of health

and other items that lie between him and me. May I make the requisite passes?"

She hesitated, as ninety-nine women out of a hundred would, at such an audacious request. Then, musingly, she quietly said, as one thinking aloud:

"My life has been a good one, there is nothing for me to fear, and if I can help you with news of your brother I will do so; my experiences are varied, and although you do not know me, yet I know you perfectly well by reputation and can trust you; you are Mr. X——, of London. Yes, I consent."

Then, settling herself comfortably in my easy chair (the base of which forms my coal-box), I quickly placed her in a trance, or rather I might say she did so herself, for she was such a splendid medium, and so habituated to the hypnotic state, that two or three passes sufficed to render her will entirely quiescent and perfectly obedient to my own.

At my bidding, she related the following most curious story of the supernatural, and one of which I have no reason to doubt the authenticity, especially as I have since heard or read of one or two similar experiences.

Only a year or two since a well-known London editor published a small volume of well authenticated supernatural experiences, and among them was one known by the title of "The Maid of Orlach," which detailed the experiences of a young woman who was possessed by the evil spirit of a monk, and the trouble she and her friends had in

driving out the terrible tenant. This story was vouched for by numerous witnesses whose good faith was never open to question.

The story told by my lady visitor was so similar to that of "The Maid of Orlach" in the particular part touching on demoniacal possession, that I see no reason to doubt it, especially as she told me her terrible experience when in a trance state, a state when one does not stoop to lying to garnish any savoury morsel or incident in their recital.

Possibly my readers may be of a different opinion and not so likely in their calm judgment to accept as a fact a story which, after all, lacks confirmation. Anyway, I give the lady's story for what it is worth.

## The Story as Told to Me.

IN 186—, I was governess in the family of T. T——, Esq., of Hylton Hall, Suffolk.

The Hall, standing in a large Park, is one of the oldest and most picturesque in the county.

It is built of red brick coigned with freestone, and is one of those buildings which, dating from the early fifteenth century, is a masterpiece of quaint design, and my chief remembrance of it is a vision of picturesque gables and turrets, twisted chimneys and oriel windows.

It was surrounded by a moat, always kept full of water, upon which usually swam a couple of score ducks and half as many geese. The only approach to the Hall was over a drawbridge, which was regularly drawn up at 10 p.m. all the year round, and lowered at 6 a.m., unless something unusual were going forward, when Mr. T—— would give his orders accordingly. He was a gentleman of the old school, a lover of quaint customs, and carried out many of them; one being his idea of everyone belonging to the household dining together in the great dining hall, so that usually each day over twenty persons were gathered together for the midday meal.

The Hall itself was a rambling old place, and my bedroom was cut off from the remainder of the building

by a long passage; it was just such a room as I love, and I will describe it more in detail.

It was about sixteen feet long from north to south, and fourteen feet wide from east to west. The bed was at the south end, and at the north end were two oak doors, that on the left leading by a long passage to the principal sleeping apartments, and the one on the right communicated by a long flight of stairs with the great hall and domestic department.

On the right of the room was an oriel window, from which could be obtained a lovely view over the demesne and the adjoining country, whilst on the left was a narrow stone fireplace, with carved chimney breast running right up to the ceiling.

Previous to taking my position as governess at the Hall, I had spent three years with the well-known spiritualist Mr. H——, but growing tired of the life and its frequent frauds upon gullible persons, I applied for, and obtained, the position of governess in Mr. T——'s family.

The welcome change from town life to a quiet country life was charming; I was supremely happy, and soon became on very friendly and even intimate terms with the T——s, who treated me quite as one of the family.

But, alas, a few months brought a strange cloud over the sunshine of my existence, for one night I discovered that *my chamber was haunted!*

Several times, during the night time, I had heard the

peculiar petulant cry given by a baby when it is irritable, or has been awakened from sleep and cannot drop off again—a hacking, peevish noise.

I heard it plainly, but put it down to natural causes, cats, or something of the kind. I knew there were no babies in or near the Hall, Master B——, the youngest child, being nearly seven years of age.

One night, however, for some reason, I could not sleep; and as I lay, in a half somnolent state, I was aware of something misty hovering near the foot of my bed.

I was wide awake in an instant, and watching a shadowy but graceful form float backward and forward several times across the room, and then melt from my gaze.

I was fully awake and felt fascinated by the peculiar hovering, swaying, and almost shapeless form.

I was not in the least alarmed, having, so to speak, dealt with apparitions and spirits for several years. When the object vanished, I laid my head calmly upon my pillow, and knew no more till the sun shone through my window in the morning.

Thinking it might cause uneasiness, and perhaps great alarm, I said nothing of the occurrence to Mr. or Mrs. T——.

About a week after, the same form paid me another visit; this time the figure was much more distinct, and I could dimly discern the outline of a tall woman, clad entirely in white.

The next night I received another visit—and the next.

On the fourth occasion, the apparition revealed itself as a beautiful woman of five-and-twenty—she was undeniably lovely, but oh! her countenance was indeed sorrowful—a Madonna dolorosa.

She stood at the foot of my bed, with her beautiful gazelle-like eyes looked pleadingly in my face, as I sat bolt upright, calm and self-possessed.

I would test her, and see if she were an evil spirit or a good. I deliberately made the sign of the cross, and to my joy she responded, with a beaming countenance, by repeating my sign, touching her forehead, breasts, and waist. She was evidently a Roman Catholic.

A few nights after this visit I was awakened by hearing deep sighs, and on opening my eyes, clearly perceived the form of a tall, dark man, dressed in rich raiment, which was partially concealed by a long mantle, which trailed upon the floor. He was a handsome man, of about thirty years of age; but, as he paced the room with folded arms, he occasionally turned his eyes upon me, and I could see that he was frowning; indeed, his whole face bore a sinister look which somewhat alarmed me, but knowing from experience that spirits can do no one bodily harm, I calmed myself, and the apparition presently vanishing, I fell asleep.

One night, when the Spirit Lady appeared, she informed me her name was Annie, and the dark man was Sir Hubert Grey, who, three hundred and sixty years ago, had first led her astray, then married her, and finally murdered her.

She bade me be warned not to speak to him, nor answer any question he might put to me, or he would obtain power over me, and I should certainly come to some harm.

The two spirits never appeared at the same time, a circumstance which caused me much wonder, as being so intimately connected in life, one would have supposed they would still have been associated in spirit form.

When I next saw Annie, she came and sat upon the side of my bed, and I had quite a long conversation with her.

"Why," I asked, "do you thus roam the night? Are you required by unseen powers to perform some penance for your sins?"

"Yes," was her reply, "I will tell you all about it, for, although during this dreadful period of more than three hundred and sixty years I have appeared to many mortals, you are the only one who has yet befriended me by showing no fear at my supernatural appearance. Some have screamed, or have fainted, others have fired bullets at me, as if I were made of substantial flesh and bone, instead of being formed of mist—an astral body taking the exact counterpart of my earthly frame as I was at my death.

"Now listen, for I must not leave my abode in spirit land for more than a brief period.

"Sir Hubert was a knight at the Court of King Henry VIII., and professing love for me, I secretly married him, and in return he confined me in this house as a kind of

prisoner at large for more than three long years. I bore him a little baby girl, and from that time, as it was not an heir to his estate, he grew cold, and left me for long periods by myself. Finally, the king, believing him to be a single gentleman, offered him the hand of a rich lady of his Court, expressing his wish that he would wed her before the year ended.

"It was then September, 1531. He visited me, and informed me of the king's desire, and offered me this house and an adequate income if I would disavow myself as his lawful wife.

"Of course, I refused such a shameful offer, which so exasperated him, that he beat me cruelly, and after a time my life became so wretched, that one night in November, taking my baby in my arms, I sprang into the moat; but, alas! I was rescued before kind death could release me from my troubles. My little girl was dead when they took us out of the black waters, and I—her mother—was her murderess!

"Sir Hubert, instead of showing any pity for me, was hardened in heart, and his treatment of me became so unbearable, that I determined to set out for London, intending to place my sad story before the king, in person.

"I travelled alone; my brave horse bearing me famously over the almost roadless country, but, alas! while resting on the bank of a river half-way to London, while my good steed refreshed himself with herbs and water in the dusk of the evening, I was suddenly pounced upon as I sat by

the swirling waters; a sword was thrust through my poor body, and I was hurled into the cold stream. One last look at my murderer, and my eyes closed for ever.

"Sir Hubert, my husband, had himself thus cruelly done me to death!

"In less than twelve months my husband followed me to spiritland, having been killed in a duel contracted by some intrigue at court.

"Spirits, although you may be unaware of it, have a kingdom of their own, and a ruler; and although their bodies may be calmly resting in their graves, the spirits are doomed to certain penances, some of them of a comparatively pleasant nature and others the reverse.

"The bad spirits have almost endless tasks assigned them, their only release being through the instrumentality of the good ones, whose spirit existence is given up to the redemption of the sinful souls who would otherwise float about in anguish through all eternity.

"My particular penance was, that although I should continually hear the cry of my little one, I should seek for it in vain—my act had bereft it of life, and my doom was that for five centuries I should search for it in vain.

"I am in no sense a prisoner, for I go whither I list, making use of my time in unceasing efforts to redeem the myriads of lost souls in our spirit kingdom.

"The word 'time' appears strange to me, for we have neither day nor night, winter nor summer; neither have we aches or pains, nor do we sleep.

"Could you gaze around with my eyes you would see spirits everywhere; in daylight and in dark we are ever present among you, although, from the grey, misty nature of our forms, we are under certain atmospheric and mental conditions more easily seen in the night than in the day-time.

"Sir Hubert's penance is a very severe one, and befitting his general evil life and final crime. He is allowed to appear to any mortal he pleases, to speak to them, and to ask them any questions he wishes; but unless he can prevail upon them to pray for him for seven consecutive nights, he cannot obtain his redemption.

"Being a murderer, he has two spirits to attend him wheresoever he goes; one, a dark and malignant spirit, the other, a spirit of goodness, who is, however, of a somewhat feeble temperament.

"If the person to whom Sir Hubert appears has the courage to face him, and listen to his conversation, he must not answer Sir Hubert, or the evil spirit attending him immediately gives him power over the mortal, and the brave man or woman, whichever it may be, usually suffers great annoyance.

"If, therefore, Sir Hubert should speak to you, do not on any account answer him, but listen to all he says, and if you can do him any service may I rely upon you, my dear mortal friend, to assist him, especially if it be with prayer?

"Now I must away. Pray, too, for me!"

When, a few nights after my interview with Annie, Sir Hubert appeared, I felt very nervous—I might almost say frightened—but I held my peace, and watched the tall spectre as it paced my chamber with noiseless footfall; sometimes looking straight towards me, and at other times approaching the window and looking out into the moon-lit garden. I noticed that the figure was very indistinct when in the full radiance of the moonlight, but when in a dark part of the room very distinct; so much so that I could even discern the pattern upon its embroidered waistcoat.

Tall and supple, Sir Hubert looked every inch a gentleman; his long dark hair, floating down to his shoulders, surrounded his pale face, and formed a kind of framing to it, throwing out the luminous features in a remarkably vivid manner.

The spectre approached the foot of my bed and gave me a full view of its countenance!

It at once struck me as handsome, the large dark eyes being wonderfully brilliant and intelligent. The nose straight and well-shaped, and the mouth!—that feature marred the face. It was not ill-formed, but the lips were thin, and the aperture a trifle too wide, while at the corners lurked little wrinkles which spoke of sarcasm and scorn.

We gazed intently, each into the other's face.

Sir Hubert placed his finger upon his lips, denoting "silence."

There was no need for such a sign, for I am too strong-minded to cry out at the mere sight of a phantom, such manifestations being very common to me.

I quietly, and significantly, placed my right forefinger upon my forehead, and looking straight into the eyes of my midnight visitor, deliberately made the sign of the cross.

The spectre scowled, and motioned me to desist, which I did, and after a brief time spent in scrutinising me, he spoke to me in a fine, mellow voice.

"Are you not afraid of me?" he asked.

I shrugged my shoulders, and pursed up my lips.

"Good! Then, perhaps, you may be of service to me. Will you help me?"

Again my shoulders went up (I was sitting bolt upright in my bed).

Then, stretching forth both hands towards me in an imploring manner, he anxiously asked:

"Will you pray for me?"

I paused, and then nodded my head.

"Will you do so at once, please?"

This request, however, was accompanied by a look of mockery, and I scarcely knew whether to acquiesce or not, for it suddenly occurred to me that Sir Hubert was probably accompanied by his two spirits—of evil and good; and it appeared to me that although the good spirit prompted him to speak, yet the evil one so controlled his countenance during his last question as to abnegate his words.

Halting between two opinions, I did not immediately reply.

"Speak!" he exclaimed, fiercely, "do not my words reach thy sleepy brain?"

I again refrained from replying, being somewhat indignant at his abruptness.

His eyes scintillated, and I knew the evil spirit had overcome the good one, as he hissed out:

"Ha! A woman! a woman! and a bold one. Madam, may I *buy* your services?"

I half smiled, and shook my head, wondering how a ghost could do business with a mortal.

"I have gold—an ample store—may I purchase your aid? For one prayer will I give ten broad golden pieces. Do you agree?"

I shook my head.

"Fifteen?"

Again I shook my head, and waved away the idea of being bought over to do a kind act.

"Twenty?"

Not wishing to prolong such an absurd bargain, and conjecturing that a ghost's gold would be as shadowy in daylight as himself, I gave a nod, expecting my visitor to depart, satisfied; but, behold, in an instant, came a noisy "chink," and something heavy fell upon my covered feet, greatly startling me, and nearly causing me to cry out with alarm at such a physical manifestation.

Before my nerves resumed their steadiness, I heard a

sardonic laugh, and glancing upward from my bed, discovered that Sir Hubert had vanished.

I laid down, said the promised prayer, composed myself to sleep, and had just resigned my senses to nature's sweet nurse, when a soft, cool hand was placed upon my forehead, and Annie's gentle voice awakened me.

She thanked me for the prayer I had offered up, but pointed out that prayer, unless free and straight from the heart, was of no avail. Prayer bought with a price was as valueless as those affixed to the sails of windmills in the East. She also bade me not to spend a farthing of the money upon myself, but to give it entirely to the poor. I promised to obey, and she left me, having first kissed me with her cold lips upon my fevered forehead, saying as she did so, "Be not afraid; I will watch over you."

When I awoke in the morning, the proceedings of the night appeared to me like a dream, but on getting out of bed, something heavy fell upon the floor; it was a bag containing twenty gold pieces, the price of my prayer!

How strange that a ghost—an immaterial body—should be able to handle a grossly material substance, such as gold! It was past belief—but there was the indubitable fact. There lay the bag at my feet.

During the week, I distributed the whole of the money to the poor of the district, taking no thanks, but stating that it was the gift of a gentleman who wished me to distribute it for him.

Neither Annie nor Sir Hubert appeared to me for several

nights after the gold was so mysteriously left in my room; but one morning, when alone in the library, I was aware of the presence of Sir Hubert, although it was eleven o'clock of the forenoon.

The room was somewhat gloomy, the day being dull, and a row of lofty trees flung their shadows upon the square-headed windows, and I could only just dimly outline his form against the heavy crimson curtains.

But although I saw his form but dimly, there was no mistaking his deep, clear voice, as he said:

"I wish you joy of your money. Has prayer become a commodity, that one can buy and sell it for miserable, sordid gold?

"Bah! I took you for a woman of religious character, and came to you for sympathy and assistance, and here you barter my imperishable soul and the ineffable boon of prayer for paltry metal—base lucre. Why do you not speak?"

I feared to speak, and answer the spectre, for I believed the evil spirit still prevailed over him, and therefore contented myself with vigorously shaking my head and making depreciative gestures.

I longed to tell the frightful thing that I did not wish for the gold, and had shared it among the poor without retaining a farthing for myself; but I could not do so without placing myself in his dread power and that of his accompanying demon.

The misty Sir Hubert paced the floor, gesticulating

violently; and, at length, uttered such dreadful things to me that I lost all control over myself, and foolishly spoke to the shade.

"Sir Hubert, for shame! How dare you judge my actions so wrongly, and accuse me of delaying your redemption, when with patience, and through my instrumentality, it might have been attained?"

Immediately, there was a wild mocking laugh, and suddenly I felt icy hands grip me around my throat, as I was thrown violently to the floor, crying loudly for help.

Sir Hubert and the demon had taken possession of my body!

Then there suddenly came a warm glow at my breast, followed by a twitching, which gave place presently to a severe pang of pain, and—— I knew no more.

* * * *

When I awoke, I found myself in bed, with old nurse and Dr. Joslin on one side of me, and Mr. and Mrs. T——, my employers, on the other.

All except the doctor looked scared, but he assured Mr. T—— that it was clearly an epileptic fit, and that I should soon be myself again.

I had a long sleep, and awoke feeling much better, and from Mrs. T—— learned what had happened to me.

Hearing my piercing screams in the library, the whole household flocked to the room, and found me writhing upon the floor, and crying out in a dreadful manner.

Not only did I cry out with pain, but from mumbled and

incoherent sentences I at length began to blaspheme and use most unaccountable expressions, and that *in a man's voice*, quite unlike my own!

Many means were tried to restore me to my normal state without avail, and, at length, I startled everybody present by crying out: "Help me! a devil has taken possession of me."

Mr. T —— at once held a Missal with a cross upon its cover before my face, at which I hissed and spat, as I cried out many vile things with a man's voice.

He knelt, and prayed, while a servant held a small silver figure of the Virgin before my eyes—and, with a violent spasm, the demon seemed to leave my mouth, as I eagerly clutched the sacred emblem, and kissed it fervently.

I presently became calm, and was taken to bed. It was quite a week before I recovered from the great shock, and then I received a visit from the spirit of Annie. I was pleased to see her, and she me, and we conversed for a long time together.

She told me that both Sir Hubert and his constant demon attendant had taken possession of me because I gave them the power of doing so by speaking to the former.

She also entered into my body, and it was the feeling of warmth at my breast which denoted her arrival within me. *She seized my soul*, and after a short struggle with Sir Hubert, bore it away to a place of safety for the time being.

The prayer uttered by Mr. T—— had done Sir Hubert much good, for in some strange and unaccountable manner, it had released him from the power of the terrible demon which had haunted and harried him for more than three centuries!

"Now, dear one," said Annie, as she floated upward, preparatory to leaving my room, "I have a surprise for you. To-morrow, Sir Hubert and I will visit you together; for our spirit ruler has informed us that, with your help, our reconciliation and redemption may be accomplished."

Then, with a sweet smile, she hovered over me, touching my forehead, cheeks, and mouth with her own cold lips, and then vanished.

At midnight, on the morrow, I was wide awake and watching, and shortly after the hour had struck, my visitors appeared.

Annie was as beautiful and sweet as ever; but Sir Hubert, dressed entirely in black, looked very fierce, frowning and glaring, first at me, and then at his ghostly bride.

He was evidently visiting me on the solicitation of Annie, who held him tightly by the hand, as he approached my bed, very reluctantly. How I longed to speak, and tell him I forgave him his treatment of me, but I dare not speak. I, therefore, smiled upon him, and bowed my forgiveness, which seemed to place him more at his ease.

Rising to my knees in bed I quietly said:

"My friends, kneel in prayer."

This, Annie had told me I could do, but I must on no account answer or argue with Sir Hubert upon any topic he might broach.

Sir Hubert seemed to seek by subterfuge for some excuse to avoid kneeling, but, at length, partly by gentle force, partly by persuasion, Annie brought him to his knees, and I made a somewhat long prayer, to which I heard him give an assentive, but whispered, "Amen!"

He rose to his feet, wrung his bride's hand, bowed to each of us, and vanished.

Annie remained, and told me that if she could prevail upon him to hear my prayers for seven nights, their dreadful penance would be removed.

For seven consecutive nights they came to me, soon after the noon of night, and I noticed that on each occasion Sir Hubert wore a different dress, each one lighter in colour than on the preceding visit, and suppose that this referred in some way to his reclamation from the sinful state; for, as his raiment became lighter, so his —if I may so put it—his *spirits* rose, while his sad face became more hopeful; till, on the termination of my sixth prayer, he wore quite a happy countenance, and his costume was of a delicate dove colour.

I anxiously awaited the coming of the seventh night, and instead of undressing and getting into bed as usual, sat down in an easy chair in a corner of the room to perform my vigil.

Twelve o'clock came, but no ghostly guests.

One o'clock—still no sign.

Two o'clock—nothing.

Then I became somewhat doubtful, and decidedly drowsy, and, at length, Nature asserting her sway, I fell soundly asleep.

How long I slept I do not know, but I was partially awakened by a tickling sensation at my nose. I rubbed it; but again came the titillation, accompanied by subdued childish laughter, and when I opened my eyes, I found a pretty golden-haired little child standing, weightless, in my lap.

In my drowsy state, I attempted to take hold of the child to fondle it, but it eluded my grasp, and floated over the bed to the lattice window, where it stood upon the sill, and laughed, flourishing a long feather in its baby hand meantime.

I arose from my chair, intending to go round the foot of the bed and secure the merry little urchin, but as I regained my feet, there was a faint rustling of some stiff dress material, and the figure of Annie glided across the room, and clutching the child to her breast, smothered it with fond kisses.

Presently, turning to me, the happy mother held the little one in her arms towards me, and, with joy, informed me that it was her lost daughter, restored to her after three hundred and sixty years.

As we were speaking, the room, which, since the advent

of Annie, had been filled with a faint light from their luminous forms, now suddenly became perceptibly lighter, and looking behind me to ascertain the cause, I saw Sir Hubert, dressed in pure white, standing in the right-hand doorway.

He looked happy, and surprised, at the sight of his dear little one, and took it from his wife for the purpose of fondling it.

It was, indeed, a happy scene, and one I wished the other dwellers in the old Hall could have witnessed, but they were all peacefully fast asleep in their different rooms, and I was doubtful if my visitors would have been visible to their unaccustomed eyes had I been able to summon them.

For the seventh time we knelt together in prayer, after whic Sir Hubert informed me I might speak to him without fear.

was, indeed, glad of this permission, as i enabled me to converse freely with them, and I was eased to learn that from this time their penance would cease. They thanked me fervently again and again, promising that while I remained on this earth they would hover over and protect me from all harm, guiding me in my course of life, and foretelling to me coming events, that I might guard against them, or take advantage of them, according to circumstances.

How I longed to shake hands with gallant Sir Hubert, and kiss the bonny cheeks of Annie and her darling little one!

Then the thought came into my mind—could I materialise the three apparitions?

Would they allow me to make the attempt and assist me?

I put it to them.

They would try, by doing anything I wished; but Sir Hubert intimated that he expected the spirit messenger every minute with their release, and asked me to lose no time.

With my spiritualistic training, I did not find the task of materialising them at all difficult, and, in a few minutes they stood before me in their very forms as they had lived, beings of flesh and blood, but with only a few minutes of reprieve from their spirit state.

Here was a grand triumph!

Sir Hubert wrung my hand with joy, and smoothed my flowing hair; Annie kissed me fervently, and the little one prattled with delight at once more returning to gain a glimpse of the material world, if only in the space of the bed-chamber in which she was born.

"One prayer more, sweet lady," pleaded Sir Hubert; and we knelt, and poured out our hearts to the Giver of all good things, to the just Judge, and were commencing the Paternoster together, when, as we reached the conclusion, he room was filled with such a strange light, that, with one accord, our voices became silent, and I looked round to see whence the light came.

Above my bed was poised an incandescent mass of light,

which was so powerful that I could not bear its glare, my eyes filled with moisture, and I reverently bent my head towards the floor; not only was my sight dazzled, but my brain was dazed. Still, I felt and knew that the unbearable rays emanated from the Blessed Virgin, the intercessor for lost mortals.

I remember hearing the voices of Sir Hubert and Annie, and the words, "Peace!—joy!—farewell!" but nothing more. I did not faint, nor lose consciousness, but in a very brief time looked towards where my companions stood, but they were no longer with me, they had vanished, while the bright light over my bed gradually grew smaller and fainter, till it vanished in a tiny tongue of flame.

Courage, love, and prayer had wrought a noble end.

# "THE PIGEON HOLE."



"We Could Dimly Discern Him Clambering Over the Rocks to Take Revenge Upon Us."

# "THE PIGEON HOLE."

DURING all my peregrinations I have never visited Ireland, although bonny Scotland and gallant little Wales are somewhat intimately known to me; but although my foot has never pressed the green sod of the Emerald Isle, I have frequently come in contact with the sons of Erin, in all conditions of life. Among them I happen to know an old gentleman at Milford, who has amassed considerable wealth as a pork factor, or, as it is usually put when carried on upon a small scale, a pig dealer.

Terence Riley is his name, or rather his adopted name, for he changed it fifty long years since, in consequence of a tragic affair which happened in wild Connemara the very year Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria ascended the throne.

Riley is a hale and hearty man, whose years have exceeded the allotted span of three score and ten, and has so prospered that he lives in a big house, with extensive and well-kept grounds.

For some reason, Riley took a particular fancy to me; simply because some years since I did him a slight service by making him up a bed upon the floor of my caravan, after finding him lying insensible in the middle of a quiet country road. He had been to the christening of a grandchild, and having (as was not often the case with him) too freely wooed the "cratur," had overturned his trap, in trying to cut a corner, by running the near wheel up a steep bank. Riley was not the first man to pay the penalty for attempting short cuts, as wheel marks on the turfy banks of sharp turns in country roads often testify.

I bathed his bleeding head, and putting him to bed, he slept and snored as comfortably as one of his own pigs, and in the morning was surprised to find himself "on the flure," in what he was pleased to term a "big rabbit hutch."

Nevertheless, Terence was very grateful for my performance in emulation of the Good Samaritan, and we have been firm friends ever since, so much so, that the week including St. Patrick's Day is a standing engagement for me to visit him.

During one of my visits, I had the good fortune to "borrow" the following story from my host, after the remainder of the household, including his dear old wife Eileen, had retired for the night.

The truth is, Terence is fond of a drop of "rale nectar," as he terms the whiskey of his land; not that he often oversteps the bounds of moderation, as is evinced by his uniform good health and sprightliness of spirits.

He is as full of anecdote and repartee as any of the numerous heroes of Lover or Lever, and has a droll manner and piquant brogue in telling a story, and a face whose ruddy glow and twinkling, merry eyes make his manner irresistibly droll.

The story I here give is not one that he voluntarily recounted, but one that is, no doubt, absolutely true, and the cause of his changing his name and country as he did long years since.

I have written the narrative as nearly as I can remember it, but have not, with my Sassenach brain, the power to remember precisely the quaint brogue in which it was given;· anyway, if the sound is not the same, yet the substance is still there, and it makes a thrilling episode in the life of an Irishman during the thirties. Neither the tongue of Terence Riley nor my pen can adequately describe the terrors of the journey through the subterranean river between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib, but doubtless had such a writer as Edgar Allan Poe taken it in hand, it would have proved one of the strongest of his unrivalled stories of the weird and wild; but I will do my best to convey Riley's feelings while he was undergoing his very startling adventure.

The good man is since dead, or I dare not give to the world what was his own private property.

## The Story as Told to Me.

IRELAND, as everyone will admit, is a beautiful if a distressful country, and those who know Connemara, the wild, mountainous, lake-studded, romantic, potheen-brewing district in the far west, know one of the fairest spots on the face of the earth, no matter where their feet may roam.

I was born there, so I ought to know; and if there is a prettier village than my own little Cong, I'd like to see it, and argue it out with any man who denies it premier position; not that it's a big, gawky, straggling village, for it is only a mere handful of a place, with not more than a couple of score houses, and a couple of hundred inhabitants. Still, its surroundings cannot be surpassed, and besides, it's *my* native spot: and I love it, although I have not set foot in it for nigh on fifty years.

Why, it's planted down between two of the finest and biggest lakes in all Ireland! There's grand Lough Mask to the north of it, and mighty Lough Corrib to the south, looking, in the sunshine, like two shields of pure gold; and right betwixt them, like a gem, lies Cong, a tiny spot, which, in my eyes, looms out bigger than the mighty mountains which look down upon it. This is what the school books call *amor patriæ*, and so it may be, but I should call it *amor Cong*.

When Queen Mary lost Calais, it so preyed upon her mind that she told her courtiers to look on her heart when she was laid out for the wake, and they would find engraved upon it the word "Calais."

That just showed what a hard heart she had, and accounts for the offhanded manner in which her half-sister Queen Elizabeth treated our own Queen of Connemara, Granna Tuaile.

Now I really think, if, after I am dead, *my* heart were to be exposed, "Cong" would be found sticking there, bedded in its softness; or, if not, it would be discovered in my brain, for I can feel it there whenever I sit me down and think.

After all, it was a dirty piece of business that parted me from my old home, nigh on fifty years ago, and I will relate how it all happened, and bad luck to the Excise-men who made me an exile.

Cong stands upon the banks of Lough Corrib, and three miles away to the north lies Lough Mask. That's plain enough; but I must also say that there is a difference in the level of these two lakes of several feet, and try as it may, Lough Mask can never grow as big as Corrib, for the simple reason that there is a subterranean river between the two, so that when Lough Mask gets too full, the overplus runs into greedy Lough Corrib, who is afraid of Mask rivalling her in size.

Everyone in Cong, fifty years ago, knew of the existence of the underground river, but although they could see the

water run into the chasm at the near end of Lough Mask, and out again right in the village of Cong, before it reached the Corrib Lough, they did not know what course it took whilst flowing under the earth.

Now it was myself that one day found out the secret course of this river—just by a mere accident, such as might have happened to anyone else.

I was wandering about among the woods and hills, and picking a nosegay of wild flowers and ferns for my colleen's birthday, when I came to a little dell among the trees which grew amid the rocky, hilly ground.

It was a deep, circular, well-like hole, perhaps twenty feet across and a dozen feet deep; and the trees and bushes growing near, and in its sides, hung over it and partially but not quite concealed it. The sides were covered with a dense vegetation of all kinds, and, amid the beautiful emerald foliage, I noticed some pretty feathery ferns.

Down into the funnel-shaped pit I scrambled, and gathered several choice specimens, and when near the bottom, I was surprised to hear a peculiar gurgling and rushing noise, right beneath my feet. I was startled at first, but stooped, and listening intently, could tell that it was the sound of running water far down below my feet.

To catch the sound from a better position I descended quite to the bottom of the hollow, and, to my astonishment, discovered a small aperture in the rocky ground, so overgrown with ferns that I could not see it until I drew them aside.

Yes, sure enough, in the bottom of the pit was a hole about two feet in diameter, which might lead to Hades for all I knew, and it was a mercy I had not fallen down it, for, not knowing of its existence, I had taken no precaution to prevent a calamity, thinking that the ferns at the bottom showed the whole depth of the peculiar dell, instead of merely masking a hole which led the "divil" knew where.

I returned to Cong, saying nothing of my discovery, but in the afternoon I brought a ball of twine with me, and tying a stone to the end, lowered it down through the aperture. Down and down it went, till I thought I had discovered the veritable bottomless pit; but, presently, I touched bottom, and on winding up my twine, and carefully measuring it, I found the stone had been down sixty-five feet, upon a *dry* bottom.

How could rushing water account for a dry stone?

I let my plummet down again, swaying it about in all directions, and then drew it to the surface.

This time it was wet, and so were a good five feet of the string!

Here was a little mystery which I must fathom literally, using my brains to discover what my twine could not.

That night I took my dearest companion, Fergus Bantry, aside, and informed him of my discovery, and says I, "Fergus, me bhoy, what say you to come wid me and find out where the ould hole leads to?"

Then says he, "Dennis O'Rafferty (that's my true

name), did ye iver know me to hould back when any sport was afoot? Sure, niver!"

Accordingly, the next morning, at daylight, Fergus and I were at the mouth of the pit, with a long rope, a lantern, and a bag of food, for who could tell how our adventure might end?

We tied a big piece of rock on the end of the rope, and carefully lowered it till we heard and felt it strike on the solid rock below. There was firm footing beneath, anyway; so we tied the upper end of the rope to the big root of an oak tree which jutted from the side of the pit, and, lighting the candle in the lantern, I shinned quietly down the rope, and after a long slide, put my feet on solid rock.

Then shook the rope, and with a "Hist! alright!" whispered to Fergus to descend, and in a couple of minutes he stood at my side.

We looked around, and found ourselves in a huge dry cavern, with a fairly even, rocky floor, but on examining the opposite side, we saw a deep stream of water, whirling and gurgling away southward.

It was clear enough to both of us, that we had found the *subterranean river*, which found vent at Cong, two miles away.

The cave in which we stood was of some extent; perhaps sixty feet from north to south, and thirty feet from east to west, while above our heads it formed a lofty dome-shaped chamber, in the apex of which was

the hole, fringed round with ferns, through which we had descended.

The air of the cave was perfectly wholesome, and the water of the river as clear as crystal, and about five feet deep.

We resolved to explore, and follow the river as far as we could, even to Cong if possible, and with the lantern dangling round my neck, I led the way over the great masses of rock which formed the floor of the cavern.

After going a couple of hundred yards, the roof became lower and lower, until at length it was within two feet of the floor.

Nothing daunted, I looked to the candle in the lantern, which I had taken from my neck, and finding from its bright flame that the atmosphere was pure, I proceeded to crawl along, upon my stomach, over the rocks, pushing the lantern in front of me; but before we had gone far, the roof above our head became so low that there was no more space for a person's body to pass beneath, and we came to a full stop, for fear we might become wedged and not able to make good our retreat.

The cave had contracted greatly in width, not being more than fifteen feet wide at this spot, ten feet of which was taken up by the river, while the remainder formed a kind of rocky path or ledge, upon which we were lying.

We paused, and looked around, as much as our cramped position would allow.

Presently, Fergus noticed that above the water the roof

was higher than where we were; in fact, in one part, there was a clear space of about two feet.

Seeing this, we crawled backward to where the cave was higher, and, having divested ourselves of our clothes, took to the water, which was exceedingly cold, as it was only the month of April.

It was scary work, this exploring the unknown, but we were both young, and took things as they came, and should not have been much surprised at anything we might have encountered, even if it had been some guardian sprite of the cave: we were prepared to face anything like true Irishmen.

We waded cautiously along for fear of dropping into some deep hole, and then it occurred to us that the lantern should be carried by the second man instead of the leader, because if the latter dropped by chance into a deep pool of water, the light would go out, and then good-bye to further exploration.

So Fergus took the lantern, while I led the way, groping along more by sense of touch than sight.

It was a rocky and treacherous bed to the river, and ever and anon I gave my shins or other parts a knock that made me wince again; but nothing daunted, I kept onward for another two hundred yards, and then we came to a grand cave, much larger than the one into which we had made our entrance.

It was so large that the feeble rays of the candle scarcely gave light enough for us to discern its more distant limits.

We were tired with our scramble, and sat down on a rock to look about, consider, and refresh the inner man. But as we had left our bag of food in the first cave, Fergus suggested he should go back for it, and I having no objection, he went, taking the lantern with him.

I sat in darkness like that which covered Egypt, until by a feeble glimmer on the water I knew he was returning, and as I awaited his arrival the idea suddenly struck me, "What a delightful spot for a private still to brew *potheen!*

I put it to Fergus, whose eyes sparkled at the notion; and, finally, we agreed to take two more into our scheme, and commence operations as quickly as possible.

A day or two after we took into partnership two likely "bhoys," Mick O'Connor, who was to be chief distiller, as he was an old hand at the illicit work; and Pat Donovan, who was to supply the still and its appurtenances.

Fergus and I were to procure malt and other material, and also to sell the spirits when made.

We had no difficulty in setting up our still, piece by piece, and by hook and crook, got together a large supply of both barley and oats for distillation, principally the latter, which was more easily procurable.

Dry turf and charcoal we could obtain in any quantity, the chief difficulty being to move it from the entrance cave to the further one, but by dint of unceasing toil, we at length got together a good supply of all that was

necessary, by carrying it though the cold water on our heads.

The "Still" cave was so large, and the entrance so low, that no smoke escaped to the second or entrance cave, to attract the attention of or give suspicion to any passers by, and to make all sure, one of us always remained on watch in the entrance cave, while Eileen, my colleen, was usually about on the surface to give notice, by a system of preconcerted signals, in case of alarm.

We had our beds of bracken in the "Still" cave, and Eileen brought us what food we required, lowering it to us by a block and tackle, which hung from the root of the big oak where I had attached the rope in making our first descent.

All went well for a couple of months, and we did a splendid trade in the district; but one fine day, a party of eight Excise officers visited Cong, as they were in the habit of visiting other places, and were quartered at the Inn for a week, and with them came our trouble.

Several of the Excise-men were young, and soon began to cast sheeps' eyes at the pretty colleens, for which Cong was then noted. Among these young fellows was a tall Englishman, named Bob Wilkins, a dashing young blade, who, from the very first glance of Eileen's dark eyes, fell desperately in love with her. This, although the natural consequence of an impressionable youth coming into contact with a swarthy Connemara beauty, with Spanish blood in her veins, was extremely awkward

for us and our "still," for although she vehemently rejected his advances, he would not be denied, but was drawn to her wherever she went, just as a piece of steel will follow a magnet.

While the Excise-men were in Cong, it behove those connected in any way with the making of potheen to lie low, and, consequently, our little company of four hid in our subterranean dwelling, and very snug we were; but as we could not live without food, Eileen had to visit "The Pigeon Hole," as we termed our cave, with a supply nearly every day.

Sometimes, according to circumstances, this took place early, and sometimes late in the day, and, occasionally, she would make her visit in the afternoon; and it was during the afternoon of a certain unlucky day that she came by an adventure which completely put an end to our pretty little trade for ever.

About four o'clock one afternoon, Eileen wandered through the woods, with her basket upon her arm, for the ostensible purpose of taking some eggs to a neighbouring village, but really to bring us a supply of food, information, and two letters. I was expecting her; and at the time appointed, sat upon a rock at the bottom of "The Pigeon Hole," awaiting her signal, which was simply three stones thrown down the entrance, at intervals of five seconds.

She was late, and, at length, I became tired of waiting, and, as all was quiet, I put my legs through the stirrup

at the end of the rope, and proceeded to pull myself up towards the entance of the cave, sixty feet above my head. Having a double purchase block at the top made this a very simple matter, and when I was but little more than half-way up, I could hear voices near the entrance, which sounded as if an altercation were taking place between two persons.

One I immediately recognised as the voice of Eileen, but the other was a man's voice, which I could not recognise, it was quite unknown to me, but was that of an Englishman, and, therefore, probably one of the Excise-men.

I quickly hauled myself to the top, but could not see out, because, as I have mentioned, the exit was at the vortex of a funnel-shaped hole, densely surrounded with ferns and other plants, growing luxuriantly in the rich dark soil.

I listened, and quickly perceived how matters stood. It was young Wilkins, the Excise-man, making fierce love to my pretty Eileen.

I dared not show myself for fear of divulging the secret entrance to the cave, yet I trembled with rage as I heard the insults to which Eileen was being subjected.

I felt in my waistbelt to see if my pistols were secure, and having assured myself that they were safe, I clung to the rope, and awaited events.

I had not listened long, when I heard sounds as of a struggle taking place quite near the edge of the crater, at whose base I was hidden, trembling with excitement.

Then I heard muffled screams, and, finally, one loud scream coupled with an appeal for help.

I could stand it no longer, no flesh and blood could, especially of an Irishman, and quitting the rope, I scrambled up the rocky side of the pit, making an unavoidable noise as *I did* so.

When my head rose above the brink, Wilkins was looking straight at me, while the semi-conscious form of Eileen, and her scattered wares, were lying at his feet.

With a fierce oath I sprang towards him, drawing a pistol as I advanced, but, in my impetuosity to secure the scoundrel, I tripped and fell, and before I regained my feet, Wilkins had taken to his heels.

Bang! Bang!! went my two pistols; but I was out of breath, and aimed wildly, consequently, I missed him each time, or there would have been one infernal spy the less, and I should not have looked upon the deed as one of murder, but simply as retributive justice.

Eileen, poor girl, soon recovered her self-possession, and I calmed her as much as I was able, but although a brave girl, her nerves were sadly shaken by the dastardly conduct of the Englishman.

The question with us now was. "Has Wilkins any knowledge of 'The Pigeon Hole,' and if so, has he any suspicion of the use to which it is put?"

It was a difficult question for us to answer, and time alone would reveal the solution.

We were obliged to exercise great caution for fear of being watched, and for some days nothing transpired to give us reason to suspect our secret being known to the Excise-men; but one night, just after dark, three stones bumped upon the rocky floor of the outer cave, and, in answer, I imitated the cry of an owl.

All four of us were playing cards when the signal was given, and dropping the cards, we sprang to our arms, not knowing what such an unusual visit might portend, although we expected something of importance had occurred.

Up the rope I went, and very soon Eileen made herself known to me from a neighbouring bush.

Poor child, she was terribly upset, and begged to be taken below, to which request, after some demur, I consented, as she whispered me that she had most important and bad news to tell us.

When safely ensconced below, she informed us, to our consternation, that some miscreant had informed against us and divulged the secret of our retreat to the Government men, and that we were to be made prisoners at noon on the following day.

A hurried council of war was held, at which it was decided to remain where we were, or at any rate until just before sunrise in the morning, when we would leave the cave, after a good night's rest, and make for a snug hiding-place we knew of on one of the numerous islands which stud Lough Corrib.

We made Eileen a comfortable bed in a cleft in the rocks, intending her to accompany us when we took our departure about 3 a.m. next day.

In half an hour we were all asleep—that would be about 10 p.m.—and things mundane troubled us no more till about midnight, when I was awakened by a heavy fall of rock or something in the entrance cave.

I sprang from my couch of dried bracken, fully dressed as I was, and quietly awakened the others, just as a second heavy thud of rock was heard.

It took but a very short time to ascertain the cause of the noise, and we were not altogether surprised to find that *the Excise-men were upon us!*

"Now, boys," says I, "what will we do? Is it give in to Govermint, or have a knock at the spalpeens for liberty? Shall it be a fight—England against Ould Ireland?"

"Fight," says they.

And, be jabers, fight we did.

We were all strong, active young fellows, and well armed, and in our rocky fastness, although only four to eight, might easily hope to hold our own till daylight, and probably help might arrive, for a rescue from Excise-men would be "an illigent divarsion" for the bhoys of Cong.

Whilst we slept they had evidently stolen a march upon us, and were all assembled in the outer cave, or "Pigeon Hole." There they stood, eight of them, and the dim light from a lantern dangling from the rope depending from the roof revealed them plainly enough to us, although we

were quite invisible to them, because of the utter darkness in which we stood.

We were not kept long waiting before the chief officer cried out:

"Dennis O'Rafferty, Patrick Donovan, Michael O'Connor, and Fergus Bantry, in the Queen's name I call upon you to give yourselves up peaceably to the officers of Her Majesty's Customs as illicit distillers of spirits. Please step out, and give yourselves up quietly to my men, otherwise we must proceed to use force."

Of course, not one of us moved, and although the officer repeated his request, and put it to us in several ways, we took no notice of him; so, presently, he proceeded to put his warrant into force by sending his men forward to secure us.

They had commenced to scramble towards us over the great masses of rock, when I suddenly exclaimed:

"Halt! The first that takes another step towards us is a dead man!"

They halted immediately, and dropping behind the rocks two or three of them fired, one shot taking effect by striking a rock and then entering the body of Pat Donovan, tearing open his chest, and rolling him over on his back in great agony.

Hearing the groans, the officer and two of his more adventurous men pressed forward to secure us, but as their figures were silhouetted against the feeble light behind them, we fired, killing the officer and wounding one of the men severely.

Then commenced a continuous firing from both parties. Eileen, poor girl, although trembling from head to foot, loaded the spare gun (poor Pat's) as well as she was able in the darkness, and I fired it each time as she handed it up from her snug position between two huge rocks.

Another Excise-man was shot through the head, and one severely wounded, during the next half-hour; the latter swore and cursed dreadfully, and seemed to be either beside himself with rage, or delirious. He was a big man, and presently we could dimly discern him clambering over the rocks to take revenge upon us for having wounded him.

Strangely enough, two of us fired at him at the same instant, but both missed him, whereupon he raised his weapon and fired in the direction of the flashes from our guns.

Mickey O'Connor was beside me, just taking aim for a shot at the advancing figure, when he fell heavily against me, nearly upsetting me.

I put out my hand to raise him, and my fingers rested on his head; bah! I shall never forget the sensation that ran through my whole frame as I touched him, for a great piece of his skull had been blown away, and my fingers were thrust into the soft, oozy matter of his brain!

Bang! bang! at intervals went the muskets and pistols, but no further damage was done on either side, until I heard a cry from the Excise-men, and knew that another bullet had found its billet. It was terribly awesome, this

fighting in the dark, as one had nothing but the flash of his opponent's gun to aim at.

Bantry and I alone remained to carry on the battle on our side, while we supposed four of the Excise-men to be still unhurt.

There yet remained a little hope that we might shoot the remaining men and escape, so we persistently loaded and fired, in the hope of finishing the fray, but could not tell if we were doing any execution.

Presently the fire from our opponents began to fall off, and finally ceased.

Had they all been placed *hors de combat* or had they run short of ammunition ?

Fergus thought the latter, but, to make sure, proceeded to wade deliberately towards the enemy, but, poor fellow, the enemy's silence was only a ruse; either the noise he made in splashing the water, or some luminosity of its ruffled surface, gave the vigilant Excise-men an indication of his whereabouts, and, almost simultaneously, three or four reports rang out, and my last comrade fell back, a corpse, into the inky waters.

Another horror took place at the same moment—an incident worse than my own death.

I heard a crash behind me, and when I recovered from the sudden shock, surmised correctly that one of the bullets in the last discharge must have struck and broken off a huge fractured fragment from the roof or side of the cave, bringing it down with a noise like reverberating thunder.

"Eileen," I whispered, "where are you, my jewel? Are you hurt? Speak, my own colleen! Eileen oge, speak to me!"

But no voice replied.

I searched for my pretty Eileen between the two great rocks where she had stood loading the guns as we fired them.

Groping my way about in the intense darkness, I found her, alas! beneath a massive rock, which I could not move by exerting my utmost strength, and then knew that I alone in the cave lived!

For a moment I felt paralysed, till calming myself, thought after thought chased like lightning through my throbbing brain.

Should I surrender?

Should I die fighting?

Was life now worth having?

What were best to do?

Should I put an end to my own life, and so end all?

A loud voice from the entrance cavern called upon me to surrender.

"Never! Come and take me!" was my defiant reply. "An Irishman never surrenders while there is breath in his body! Huroo! ye spalpeens, come one at a time and I'll make could bacon av the lot of ye!!"

After a pause, and some low conversation, I heard my opponents clambering towards me. As they scrambled over a huge boulder, midway between the two caves, I could count them.

One, two, three, four!

And I alone with the dead.

At least, I would have one more shot, and placing my musket to my shoulder, I fired at the foremost, and bowled him over into the water. This was the signal for the other three to fire at me, which they immediately did, and then came a blank.

* * * *

When I regained consciousness, I was lying upon a rock, which rose a few inches above the water in which I found myself. I felt sick, cold, and exhausted, and had barely sufficient strength remaining to climb upon the table-like rock which had been my refuge, when I again fainted away, this time from pain, for my left leg was wounded and useless. The bone of the thigh had been struck by a bullet and fractured, but not broken, and the jagged wound had bled so profusely that I was extremely weak from loss of blood.

I gathered together my scattered senses, as I lay upon my back on the rock, with my eyes wide open, as if they were of some service to me in the utter blackness which surrounded me.

I gradually called to mind the stirring events of the day, the battle with the Excise-men, my dead comrades, and the dear little colleen I should never see again, and then my emotions overcame me, and I wept long and bitterly, for surely man was never in a more hopeless plight.

How long I remained ruminating upon the friendly rock

I cannot tell, but at length I bethought me of my present awful situation, and set my wits to work to endeavour to concoct some mode of saving my life, if such a thing were really possible to one so desperately situated.

How did the case stand with me?

I had evidently been shot during the last advance of the Excise-men, and had fallen into the subterranean river, which had borne me, wounded, bleeding, and half dead with cold and exhaustion, to the friendly rock upon which I was lying.

"The Pigeon Hole" was at least two miles, by road, from Cong to where the underground river burst from its cavernous meandering, and doubtless it would be a greater distance by following the mazy, intricate course of the stream beneath the earth. To endeavour to go back to "The Pigeon Hole" meant death by the hangman, while to press forward *might* possibly bring me out at Cong, where many kind friends would placé me in a safe hiding-place. There was just the mere chance that I might get through, but it was a very feeble one.

However, I would make the attempt to follow the course of the river, and endeavour, by wading and swimming, to reach its exit. To stay where I was meant certain death, and although many in my plight would have embraced the King of Terrors with something like a friendly feeling, still there was a strange foreboding in my heart that some great happiness lay beyond the mere fact of my escaping with my life.

My comrades and my affianced bride were lying dead in the cave behind me; yet hope seemed to thrust me forward—why, at the time, I could not even surmise—but I know now, and thank Heaven for the courage I that day received to face dangers which would have appalled the heart of a hero.

With clinging clothes I carefully slipped from my rocky perch, and from sheer gratitude kissed the inanimate mass of lime-stone for having so far been the means of saving my poor life.

The water struck chill to my exhausted frame, and my left leg had become much swollen by my endeavours to use it. I groped ahead and around me as I proceeded, limping, stumbling, and swimming as best I could. Sometimes the space in which I found myself was very circumscribed, and at other times I knew I was in a lofty cave-chamber by the reverberation of the sound of the splashing water as I stumbled among the rocks. At such times I would leave the water, and sit on the rocky, toad-tenanted floor of the cavern, and rest awhile, thankful for some reprieve from the frigid stream.

My limbs, from constant abrasion, were covered with bruises, the skin upon my hands being literally in rags. My head and face were almost shapeless from the constant falls upon and against the rocks, and I am sure no one in my direful plight would have recognised me. All this I could not see, but I felt it acutely.

Oh, for a mouthful of bread! or, even better still, the

friendly rays of a humble rushlight! But those common articles of everyday life were now far from my reach, and seemed to me as precious as the rarest gems monarch ever wore.

Musing, despairing, but still retaining some hope, I at length fell asleep in one of the vast caves I had entered, and must have remained in the realm of Morpheus for some time, because when I awoke, my strength seemed much renewed, although I was terribly stiff, and so sore that I could scarcely move my battered limbs.

"Courage!" I said to myself; "only about a mile parts you from your friends. Struggle on, brave heart, while a throb remains in you!"

Again I entered the river, and groped my way along, sometimes taking a wrong direction, and wandering away into one of the many ramifications with which the tortuous river abounded; then, with a groaning spirit and palsied limbs, I retraced my steps, only, perhaps, to find myself in some other *cul-de-sac*, from which, sick at heart and famished, I had to win my way back to what I took to be the main course of the river.

At length I came to another large cave—as I could tell by its hollowness and power of magnifying sound, with its adamantine, echoing walls—and I determined to take another rest, for my strength was now fast failing me and I felt dizzy.

I hobbled ashore, and stumbled a few paces onward, with a curious, hopping gait, so as to rest myself on a dry

spot, and, if possible, obtain a little of my sole refreshment, sleep. A *dry spot* seems strange for a man who has been in the water for hours to be particular about, but I remember that was the only thing I was solicitous about just at that time, as even my wounded leg, which had been so painful, now only ached in a dull, monotonous manner.

With arms extended before me, I moved carefully onward to higher ground, and was about to sink down exhausted upon the floor, when the earth beneath me gave way, and I found myself *floundering in a sea of deep, oozy mud!*

In my dreadfully weak state, the sudden shock was so great that I nearly fainted from sheer fright. I fell completely under the surface of the muddy basin, and ears, eyes, and mouth were filled with the thin mixture of clay and loam, which had formed from the percolation of water through some little opening high up overhead.

Far away above my head I could see the dim light of the sky—a dull, coppery glimmer which showed itself through an opening not, apparently, larger than the top of my thumb. I knew by the faint light that it was late in the evening or very early in the morning, or else the mud had so bedimmed my eyes as to render them practically useless.

There I stood, up to my shoulders in the terrible oozy slime, afraid to move in any direction in the impenetrable darkness, for fear of taking a step out of my depth, when I should undoubtedly be smothered in the mud, which was much too thick for me to swim in.

The red star above me gave not a ray of hope. It was probably the last peep I should have of the world above —or rather of the blessed sky above it—for I felt that long ere morning my strength would have failed and my last Ave have been uttered.

Which way should I move to get out of the horrible quagmire in which I was embedded?

I strained my eyeballs till they ached, looking for some glimmer of light to guide me, but I might as well have attempted to gaze through a sheet of iron, the darkness was like that in Egypt in the days of Moses; it might be thought to have a material sensation to the human sense of touch, so blanket-like did it appear.

What was that?

My ear caught the faintest gurgle of water on my left, and I knew by its welcome sound that the river lay close behind me.

I turned eagerly round to greet the hard, rocky brink of the river with my feet, but at the second step my sound leg slipped, and I again fell headlong into the slimy ooze, mentally giving myself up for lost; but my feeble, outstretched hand lighted upon a ledge of rock, and in a deplorable condition I slowly drew my failing frame from the tenacious mud.

With trembling limbs and gnawing stomach, I entered the friendly stream, and laved my weary limbs to free them from the muddy impurities of my ooze bath.

The pure water thrown upon my face seemed to refresh

me, and blindly I stumbled forward, almost aimlessly and hopelessly, for I feared the numerous endless ramifications into which I wandered would exhaust me before I found the true stream of the river.

Was ever human being in worse plight than I?

With fractured thigh, bruised and bleeding hands and feet, scarred, torn, and distorted face and head, an exhausted frame, an absolutely empty stomach, a heart like stone, and maintaining a hopeless struggle against nature and fate in a subterranean cave, three or four miles long—such was my plight, and a more desperate one can scarcely be imagined. My palsied limbs trembled at every step, and even my lower jaw drooped like that of a corpse; sheer will-power alone sustained me.

Oh, for a knife or pistol! then would I have put an end to my dreadful torment of body and mind. But I had nothing to befriend me to a quittance of this world, and blindly, helplessly, hopelessly, I struggled forward, till some accident should snap my dwindled thread of life, and mighty Death fold me to rest in his welcome, peaceful arms.

Half deliriously I groped my way along the treacherous river bed, where mighty boulders, breast high, frequently opposed my progress; and at length I reached an enlargement of the tunnel, where it expanded into a fair-sized cave, as I could tell by the echo caused when I splashed the water with my hand. It was nearly circular, and to my dismay, although I went quite round its circumference more than once, I could find *no exit from it!*

The water here seemed to take a circular sweep and form a kind of miniature Mälstrom.

"What, then, is in the centre?" I asked myself. "Is it possible that here the river sinks through a well-like orifice in its bed, and finding a lower level makes its exit through another series of underground tunnels?"

If so, my doom is undoubtedly sealed.

I should die a lingering death of starvation, or perhaps become insane first! The new thought seemed to paralyse my limbs, and for some time I stood as if petrified at the fate which awaited me.

How I envied my comrades, lying peacefully in death! how I envied my sweet Eileen, as she lay crushed beneath the mass of limestone rock! They at least had been spared the agony of a living death, a sudden unseen shock had bereft them suddenly of life; whilst I must linger, with horror gnawing at my heart, and witness my own sufferings alone, with no word of human sympathy to comfort my last despairing moments. Surely death in any form were preferable to this lengthened agony, even death at the hangman's hand.

"Holy Mary, aid me!" I cried, as, scarcely knowing what I did, I staggered forward, amid the Stygian darkness, to what I expected to be the vortex of the whirlpool in which I found myself.

Suddenly my hand struck a rock, which rose several inches above the water, and presented a somewhat flat surface.

This discovery gave me some sense of hope, for it *proved* that the water had some exit other than through the floor of the cave.

Probably the position of the rock caused the impinging water to take a circular course, and this had impressed me with the idea that I was in a whirlpool having an exit at bottom of its vortex.

Once more I carefully groped my way around the walls of my dank prison, and to my joy I found an opening where the water flowed away—yes, joy, I repeat, for amid my awful surroundings the discovery of an exit for the water came in such sharp contrast to my previous despair that I experienced a thrill of true joy throughout my whole being.

Where the water escaped it was just possible that I might by some means do the same!

At about what I should judge to be a distance of twenty feet from the rock, I found that the roof of the cave came so low that it was within six or eight inches of the water, just leaving space for me to pass through without being suffocated if I elevated my face. Still, I could not tell but that a little further on the roof might become even lower, or, in fact, that it might even *dip beneath the water*, in which case I could never escape alive.

I felt dreadfully excited, but so weak that I could scarcely maintain my footing against the current of the river, which, after all, exerted but little pressure, as it was but a sluggish stream; but, like a palsied man, my

aching limbs were almost useless, and my energy almost spent, nature was slowly and unwillingly, but surely, giving out.

I would rest awhile on the friendly flat rock before going further.

Drawing my weary, leaden limbs from the chilly stream, I sank upon my granite couch, and, with dizzy brain, tried to think what I could do to ameliorate the pain of my useless left leg, which had received a severe wrench in my second peregrination round the circular cave.

Could I bandage it with strips of my clothing? or could I—— But I could think no more; a drowsy numbness stole over me, seizing both body and brain, and I knew that I was powerless to move hand or foot, unless the sleep into which I was gliding should recoup my exhausted frame, and once more put some little vigour into my limbs, with which I might struggle forward, probably to perish amid my watery surroundings.

I remembered nothing more, except that a feeling of relief at the cessation of my pain, and sense of security for the time being, remained in my mind as I dozed or swooned away.

As I lay flat on my back upon the rock, with my right hand hanging over the edge, my hand was laved by the water, which just covered it, and gave a pleasant sensation to my whole body, as I fell into an unconscious state.

How long I slumbered I cannot tell, but it must have been for many hours, and I should probably not have awoke then, but from a sense of coldness about my legs, which caused me to awake with a sudden start as from some horrid dream.

For a moment I could not tell if I were really awake or only dreaming.

From all sides came the sound of whirling, bubbling water.

With a flapping, splashing noise the water struck the side of the rock on which I lay, and went eddying and whirling against the rugged sides of the cavern, causing a hissing, seething sound as the bubbles burst, and the imprisoned water was whirled with ever increasing speed and friction from point to point of the rocks, finding its way under shelving strata and into miniature caves.

What had happened?

Alas! I knew but too well.

Heavy rain or a storm had raised the waters of Lough Mask, whose surplusage was now pouring through its subterranean outlet into its sister Lough, Corrib!

The red glow which I had noticed in the cave had been a tiny portion of a lurid sky, the forerunner of a *heavy storm.*

The stone on which I rested was some foot and a half above the water when I went to sleep, but now, on feeling with my hand, I found to my horror that while the lower part of the top was submerged, the highest point —that on which I lay—was but six inches above the surface of the boiling flood, which now ran at a rate

which made swimming, even to a strong man, a difficult task, but to me in my crippled state a matter of sheer impossibility.

Then suddenly the truth flashed through my mind: the roof of the cave—at the exit—must now be *some inches under water!*

The knowledge that death was so near me caused my limbs to tremble violently, while my jaw dropped and trembled as in one in a fit.

My hair, I believe, erected itself, for I was cognisant of a strange creeping of my scalp.

In my sudden despair I uttered an inarticulate noise as I attempted to scream, while great beads of perspiration gathered upon my forehead and neck. Had I been providentially spared—one out of five—that I might face this unutterable anguish and torturing death? Surely not; it was too utterly horrible to contemplate.

Then I calmed down and tried to reason with myself, but it was of no avail, for the next moment I would yell with terror, till little lights seemed to dance before my eyes from the exertion and the very horror of my situation.

Those scintillations appeared to my bewildered senses to take form—the cave was peopled with little flying demons, who jeered at and mocked my despair, and revelled in my unbearable agony.

"Come, welcome, Death! Release me from this agony of life, before the demon of madness seizes me! Is my

life's sand really run to the last grain? Can no power aid me?"

And from the echoing cavern I seemed to hear the awful response:

*None!*

Now and again between these paroxysms of horror and despair I gained a brief period of calm, and during one of these I put out my hand to ascertain if the water had risen yet higher.

Only a couple of inches of the rock on which I now knelt remained uncovered by the encroaching water, and as I touched it, it appeared to sear my very finger tips like molten metal. I knelt amid a hell of torturing water.

I would pray to the Blessed Virgin to aid me in my last extremity, for my case was now too hopeless for mortal help.

In my fast closing tomb I prayed fervently, not for escape, for that appeared impossible, but for a merciful death, a painless passing away; and strangely enough my prayer seemed to give me resignation to my fate, and although the stone was now submerged and I knelt in the water, my terror had to a great extent departed, and I was contemplating my end even calmly; calculating how long it would be before the surging waters became too powerful for me to fight against, and whether it would be least painful to struggle with the flood until I was exhausted, or when the flood dislodged me from my friendly rock to put my head under water and drown myself as

quickly as possible, when something gave me a violent blow in the back which hurled me into the roaring turmoil which surrounded me.

I sank, but quickly rose again to the surface, but my strength was too feeble to battle against the force of the current, and I was borne swiftly along, round and round like a piece of driftwood, and coming into frequent contact with projecting rocks, but still struggling for my life while yet a spark of that life remained.

As, helplessly, I gasped for breath, my lungs became filled with water and my nostrils distended with an indescribable thrilling sensation.

Then came a sudden crash and—oblivion.

* * * *

I awoke to consciousness of what was going on around me nearly a week later, when I found myself lying on a straw bed in a hovel, almost as dark as the cave, from which, by some strange revolution of the wheel of fortune, I had made my escape.

Biddy M'Gilf, into whose kind hands someone had placed me, owned a little cabin away among the mighty Benabeola Mountains, and there I had been hidden away for a week, being daily visited by a doctor who lived a few miles distant.

On the morning I recovered consciousness Biddy would not allow me to speak till the doctor had seen me, and I lay wistfully awaiting his arrival, that I might at least ask a few questions to relieve my mind as to my miraculous escape from death in the cave.

Towards noon Dr. Clancy rode up to the door on his shaggy little pony, and was very pleased to find I was awake at last, and after examining me carefully all over, especially my leg, which had been bound in splints, gave me permission to exercise my tongue for a few minutes.

I learned that three of the Excise-men had been killed outright, two seriously wounded and one slightly, while the others, upon entering the inner cave, found my dead comrades, but, after a careful search, not discovering me, assumed that I had been shot, and having fallen into the river, my body would doubtless float out at Cong, unless it became entangled in the rocks or was caught in some *cul-de-sac* from whence it would never more emerge.

"A reward of ten shillings was offered for the recovery of your corpse," said Dr. Clancy, "and Tim Brierly the otter-killer, who was at the pool at Cong the second morning after the affray, saw you pop from the rock outlet just at the peep of day.

"'Dead, by jabers!' said he, and popped you in his sack. 'Sure and the Rivinue sha'n't have the poor lad at all, at all. Bad luck to their dirthy money, let them kape it, and it's the poor lad's father shall have his darlint again for dacent burial.'

"So he tottered off with your body to your father, and to make a long story short, they found life in you, sent for me, we had you smuggled away to the mountains in a hay-cart, and here you are!"

"But, doctor, dear, what have they done with Eileen? Did they bury her dacently?" said I.

"Poor girl," said the doctor, "ask me no questions of her. She was put carefully away, you may be sure. And now take this and have a good sleep, and if, when I call to-morrow, you feel stronger, you shall learn a secret worth knowing." He then gave Biddy directions as to my food, and departed.

Next day Dr. Clancy called again, and pronounced me as picking up strength wonderfully, and we conversed upon my miraculous escape.

I described everything up to the time I was washed from the rock, and the good medico gave it as his opinion that when I was whirled off the rock I must have been sucked under water, and so thrust along the subterranean passage and out at its mouth, where Tim found me. No doubt my "Cave of the Mälstrom" was but a very short distance from the exit of the river, or every spark of life would have been utterly quenched. A dreadful storm had occurred on the second night after the fight, and this would fully account for the rising of the water.

When the doctor rose to leave, I reminded him of his promise to reveal a secret to me.

"Bad scran to the lad! haven't ye had enough already of mystery and divilment to last ye a lifetime?"

"Of caves and blackness more than enough, doctor, but if it is nothing fairer than 'The Pigeon Hole' ye've

got to tell a poor bhoy, pray keep it to yourself, and good mornin' to ye!"

"Calm, me boy, be calm, and I'll show ye a live *apparition if ye'll promise me not to touch it even wid* yure finger!"

"Shure, doctor," says I, "it's comical ye are. Bring out yer apparition, and I won't move a muscle at it. I've seen too much of real horrors to be scared at a mere ghoust."

Taking me at my word, with an admonitory, "Now steady, me bhoy!" he led in—could I believe my eyes? —Eileen.

She had only been rendered unconscious by the rock, and so held down by her clothing that she could not move. Those who went down to bring up the dead bodies brought up Eileen, who, instead of being made prisoner, was carefully spirited away.

"Still, my lad," said Dr. Clancy, "she must not escape again, and if you will promise to be her judge, jury, and warder, she is yours, and her sentence must be—'For life.'"



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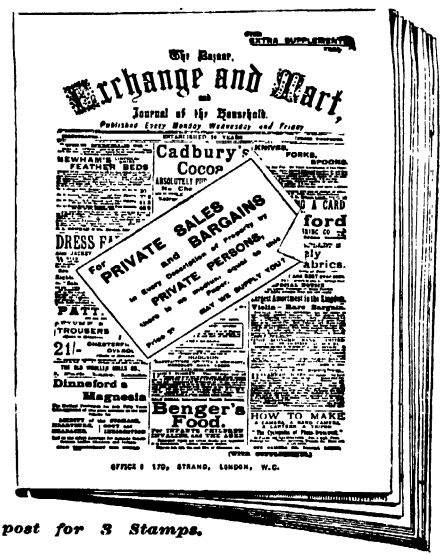
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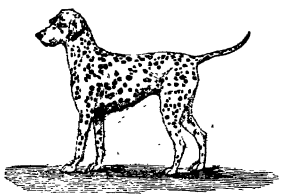
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